WHERE DO YOU GO OUT WHEN YOU GO OUT?

Young people's views on youth friendly facilities in East Cork
# Young People’s Views on Youth Friendly Facilities in East Cork

**A Report by**

Mary McGrath and Deborah Lynch

January 2007

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- The authors would like to thank David Stanton for his encouragement and for providing information, statistical and otherwise.
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Deborah Lynch is a lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies at University College Cork and lives in East Cork. Kiran is her 8 year old son. She is passionate about young people’s participation and active involvement in influencing the world around them. Deborah became involved in the analysis of the exploratory survey and co-authored the report. She comes from a social work background and has practiced in a range of different settings, including working on community development projects in South Africa, India, Nepal and Indonesia. She obtained her Ph.D at the University of Sydney in Australia. Her most recent publication is: Lynch, D. & Forde, C. (2006) Social Work within a Community Discourse: Challenges for Teaching, Social Work Education – The International Journal, 25, 8, 851-862.
This report represents a landmark in a process focused on young people that has been ongoing since late 2004. At the core of this process has been the active participation of the young people of East Cork. By providing the structures and opportunities for young people to express their needs, hopes and aspirations, East Cork Area Development has been able to work in partnership with young people, the Health Service Executive (HSE), and the other organisations that support them to begin a process to address these needs.

"Where Do You Go When You Go Out?" is an account of how we set out, not only to listen to our young people and act upon what they said, but also to enable them to share their thoughts in an inclusive, innovative, and participative way.

Initially, a questionnaire was circulated, which saw over seven hundred young people indicate their desire to see a broader range of youth facilities throughout East Cork. To deepen the consultation process, East Cork Area Development worked with representatives from youth organisations then organised a conference for young people. This was held in Midleton in October 2005.

In December 2004, East Cork Area Development (ECAD) set out to prioritise the needs of young people in the East Cork area and to start a consultative process with those who work directly and are concerned with young people. This is delivered through the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP). ECAD is committed to “The inclusion of all members of our community in deciding where we want to go and how we get there” (ECAD, September, 2005).

In consulting youth organisations in the area, a common priority clearly emerged, the need for a place where young people could meet and participate in a range of activities. In Youghal, this was about finding “a place to go” for young people. In Midleton, it was about “young people walking up and down the streets” and having “no-where to go”. In Cobh, it was about designing “a place of their own” for young people. Later, other groups from Carrigtwohill and Glanmire became involved with the same concerns. How did the young people themselves see it? An exploratory survey was carried out in preparation for a youth conference in Midleton. Exit the Street. Through this process, young people from second level schools, Youthreach and Area Youth Projects in East Cork expressed their thoughts, feelings and views.

The report will describe this work that is ongoing and has different facets. These include: the survey of over 700 young people in East Cork, Exit the Street, a young peoples’ conference where groups of young people presented using a variety of creative media including film; the East Cork Youth Network (ECYN); a Youth Film Project, a Youth Exchange Project and The Skit Day.

The report presents a snapshot of some aspects of young people’s lives, experiences, feeling and views. They told us emphatically that they do not have adequate facilities; they identified where they go and what they do currently and what they would like to happen in the future. This includes recreational facilities and places to “hang around” with friends. They also identified the issues that concern them.

Based on the responses of young people and on our learning from this process, we make the following recommendations that are further developed in this report:

**Recommendation One**
Meet the needs of young people for recreational facilities. Our work highlights the urgent need for action at local and policy level.

**Recommendation Two**
Further develop networks with and for young people in East Cork.

**Recommendation Three**
Forge links between schools, Youthreach and Area communities including youth centres. All are working towards the well-being of young people.

**Recommendation Four**
Build confidence and skills (including leadership skills) of young people in a variety of ways.

**Recommendation Five**
Ensure that facilities developed are inclusive of all young people living in East Cork.

**Recommendation Six**
Sharing of information is needed.

**Recommendation Seven**
Address the health awareness needs of young people.

**Recommendation Eight**
Encourage young people to be actively involved in their East Cork communities by creating opportunities for them to contribute.

**Recommendation Nine**
To mobilise all members of the East Cork community.
INTRODUCTION

In October and early November 2005 these headlines appeared in our national and local newspapers. They reflect positive vibrant and active images of young people and of their East Cork communities. What sparked these headlines? What are the stories behind them?

As expressed by Edward and Hatch, there is “a need for a story about young people that is not just about young people at risk, young people in education or preparing for work or young people being diverted from anti-social or criminal behaviour. The story of young people must add up to something positive. It must convey that we are interested in young people not just because they will be adults one day in the future, but because it is important to do right by them now” (2003, p.58).

These headlines are referring to an East Cork Youth Conference that was held in Midleton, East Cork on Tuesday October 24th 2005.

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THE IRISH EXAMINER, TUESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2005

CONFERENCE TO FOCUS ON YOUTH
THE EVENING ECHO, TUESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2005

EAST CORK YOUNG PEOPLE’S CONFERENCE TO PROVIDE POSITIVE FORUM
THE MUSICAL PEOPLE, THURSDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2005

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SUCCESSFUL YOUTH CAFES SET TO MAKE CORK DEBUT
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The report will address the following questions:

HOW DID IT ALL START?
WHO WAS INVOLVED?
WHAT WAS THE CONFERENCE ALL ABOUT?
WHAT HAPPENED AFTER IT?

We will describe work that is ongoing and has different foci. These include: an exploratory survey of over 700 young people in East Cork on the lead up to the conference; “Exit the Street”, a young peoples’ conference where groups of young people presented using a variety of creative media including film; the East Cork Youth Network (ECYN); a Youth Film Project; a Youth Exchange Project and The Skit Day.

This Report and its launch are also an integral part of this work in motion. All of this is about young people exploring and identifying the issues which affect their lives and examining the facilities that are available to them now. It is also about identifying the ways in which these facilities can be improved upon in East Cork and the development of support networks. Though we are aware of the common use of the term “recreation” by government (Office of the Minister for Children, 2006) and other research in Ireland (de Roiste & Dineen, 2005), the term “facilities” is used intentionally by us. This term was used initially in the context of involving young people in a conference which was about the need for them to have “a place to go”: hence “Exit the Street: A Place of Our Own”.

In this work we are interested in the places, locations and structures that facilitate the gatherings of young people in a social context. Nevertheless, the term “recreation” is one which we accept as important, particularly in relation to the National Recreation Policy for Young People due to be published this month. This policy document we are led to believe will prioritise both “recreational facilities” and “youth cafe type facilities” in particular (O’Brien, 2007). We have avoided using the term “leisure” as our focus is on places and on activities rather than on all the things young people do in their free time such as watching television and reading. We also feel that the term “leisure” has been commercialised (Caldwell, 2005).

Our use of “youth friendly” in the title of the report is a descriptive term in relation to facilities named by young people themselves, it is very specific to the report and implies that we are naming facilities that young people have identified as important to them in meeting their needs, hence “youth friendly”.

These headlines are referring to an East Cork Youth Conference that was held in Midleton, East Cork on Tuesday October 24th 2005. Some 250 people attended the conference, Exit the Street: A Place of Our Own. Of these, 150 participants were aged 15 to 19 years. But this is only part of the story. This report is an account of a process of engaging with young people.

Exit the Street: A Place of Our Own
THE MUSICAL PEOPLE, TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2005

The Conference is part of that process, one which involves young people and those who work with them in this East Cork community.

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The work in this report is based on a belief that young people are best able to express what young people need. They do not need interpreters. They do need the support of all of us in the community to enable it to happen in a way that is positive and enjoyable and provides learning for all. Throughout this report, we choose to use ‘young people’ because in our view, it is not over laden with preconceived notions like terms such as teenager, adolescent or youth. For more detailed exploration of representations of ‘youth’ refer to Christine Griffin’s work (2004). In the context of our work, young people are people between the ages of 13-19 years and who live in the East Cork Area. Like Stainton Rogers and colleagues (2004), we argue that young people are a highly diverse group. Some are at school, others have already left, and some are working, while others are not. As these authors state, “All that (largely artificially) defines them is a matter of age” and “They vary along all manners of factors including those of class, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity. They also vary in their religion (or lack of it), their political affiliation (or lack of it) and the sub-cultures to which they belong” (p.19). When we use the term ‘young people’ here we use it in an inclusive sense. It is only exclusive in relation to age. For us ‘young people’, though a distinct grouping with their own experiences, needs and ways of behaving, are part of the whole community of ‘people’ in East Cork.

The report is a ‘snapshot’ of what it is like to be a young person in East Cork at this particular point in time. We acknowledge that things are changing all the time at the local level and these young people are moving on. We are also very aware of the rapid changes occurring at the national level in Ireland. As we write, we await the delivery of a National Recreation Policy for Young People (Office of the Minister for Children, March, 2006), informed by a public consultation process that involved young people. This is all happening in the context of rapid social changes in Ireland, the ‘Celtic Tiger’ economy, greater cultural and ethnic diversity and legislative and policy developments in the area of children’s rights (Hennessy and Hogan, 2000 cited in Lalor and Baird, January 2006, p.14). The National Development Plan (2007-2013) is due to be announced with up to €50 billion in social spending programmes. We believe the seven year strategy will include funds for recreational facilities for children. It is being drafted by the Office for Social Inclusion (O’Brien & Paul, 2007).

In writing this report, we hope that a balance has been maintained between producing a document that belongs to young people, that represents them and that they will want to pick up, read or flick through, and one that will help achieve facilities that meet identified needs by mobilising the East Cork community as a whole as well as service providers and funders of local groups in the area.

The outcomes of consulting young people are important, and so is the process itself (Hill et al., 2004). While consultation activities can bring a range of new skills and promote self-confidence in young people, we agree with these authors who argue that “if these gains in confidence are accompanied by lack of impact, which then results in a disillusionment, they may be highly negative for the individual and for society” (p.61). We are acutely aware of this danger. One young person in our exploratory survey wrote “By the time something happens I’ll be old enough to drink.”

We like the approach suggested by Hill and colleagues which involves collaboration among all the stakeholders, including young people and is committed to achieving real and tangible outcomes based on what young people want (2004, p.77). In his launch of the Report of the Public Consultation for the Development of the National Recreation Policy for Young People, Brian Lenihan TD acknowledges that services designed in consultation with young people are much more likely to succeed that those developed without their involvement. He highlights the importance of partnerships particularly at local level in developing recreation opportunities for young people (Office of the Minister for Children, March, 2006, p.3-4).

In writing this report we want to capture a way of working with young people and move this process forward in a positive way. The report is divided into two parts. The first section focuses on the process of involving young people through the exploratory survey on their needs, the conference Exit the Street and other youth activities. The second part looks ahead to the way forward and makes some recommendations.
According to the National Children’s Strategy “Children will have a voice in matters which affect them and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity” (Government of Ireland, 2000, p.30)

The last thirty years has seen the development of a considerable body of literature on the meaning of consultation as a mode of involving children and young people in decision making. Hart’s ladder of participation (1992) is among the best-known models and is used in the National Children’s Strategy. Other and potentially more appropriate models have since been devised, including Treseder’s non-hierarchical and dynamic conception of involving children/young people in decision-making. We like Treseder’s interpretation of consultation, “a process which requires the commitment to take on board young people’s views and present detailed information back to them” (1997, p.4). For us, consultation is an on-going process. This is emphasised by the Louth Comhairle na nOg Report (2005, p. 3) which argues that consultation as a method of gathering views must be linked to decision-making and that the views of those being consulted must be fed into a wider process, in which young people remain involved. We view adult responsibility in this process of decision-making as critically important. As noted by Kirby and colleagues (2003, cited in National Children’s Office, Children’s Rights Alliance and National Youth Council of Ireland, June 2005, p. 16) even if decisions are made autonomously by young people, “implementation will require input from adults and is ultimately dependent on adult structures, responsibility and power”. The UK National Youth Agency (April, 2004) and the Irish guidelines, “Young Voices” (NCO, CRA & NYCI, June 2005) are excellent resources on the topic of involving young people (see Recommended Reading).

In line with this goal and government commitment (in keeping with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1990), there is some impetus at the national level for consultation with young people and their participation in policy development and planning. These developments include structures such as Comhairle and Dáil na nOg, Student Councils, National Children’s Office (NCO) Children and Young People’s Forum and publication of participation guidelines (National Children’s Office, January 2007). The lack of recreational facilities was a major issue identified by children and young people in the consultation process on the National Children’s Strategy, a topic in discussions at the Dáil na nOg in 2005 (and again in 2006) and recently young people were directly involved in the public consultation process on the development of the National Recreation Policy (Office of the Minister for Children, 2006).
In December 2004, ECAD engaged in a consultation process to identify the needs of young people in Cobh, Youghal and Midleton through discussions with the main youth organisations with whom ECAD had links in each of these areas. These were: Cobh Youth Services, Midleton Youth Project, Fáirge and the Youghal Youth Committee (Appendix 3). Part of the brief was to highlight any common needs in the East Cork area as a whole.

In late 2004, at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Midleton Youth Project, the view was expressed that “young people have nothing to do on a Saturday night other than walk down one side of the street and back up the other – it’s a disgrace”. This view was mirrored within the other two communities, Youghal and Cobh. Phrases like “nothing to do” or “the need for a place to go” were being used by representatives of the organisations who worked with young people in the area. One of the members of the Youghal Youth Committee in his role as a voluntary member of the Fáirge Club in Youghal, prioritised the need for a place for young people to go that they could “call their own” and “hang out” and that would accommodate the significant need in terms of the large numbers of young people in that area. Interestingly, this focus was on ‘buildings’. Cobh Youth Services are one of the main youth service providers in that town. They had recently accessed funding to buy a building and wanted to look at “what would happen in that building”. This led to putting together a plan for the use of the building in consultation with all of the young service users, youth workers (paid and voluntary) and the members of the Management Board. This was about ownership so that young people in Cobh would have a place that they could identify as their own.

Thus a common priority had quickly and clearly emerged from the initial research discussions. The aim of the project was to host a conference in order to gain a better insight into what young people were saying and further develop ideas around meeting their needs in an appropriate way. This was supported by those who had been involved in the initial research discussions. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the next step would be well informed and youth orientated. It aimed to bring together young people and those interested in working with young people in our community as a whole. These included: youth groups, youth workers (paid and voluntary), teachers, social workers, health care providers, parents, community groups and statutory agencies.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES WERE:

- To bring together all those interested in working with young people in East Cork to look at models of best practice in relation to a “place” for young people, including “youth cafés”.
- To work in partnership with young people to support them in identifying their needs and in finding ways to meet these needs.
- To create a dynamic forum for the exchange of ideas and information to help us shape the future.

The conference would provide an opportunity for young people to express their views and feelings in creative ways through a wide variety of media. It would utilise feedback from young people themselves about the issues that affect them and about the kind of future that they envisaged.

INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Based on the 2002 Census figures, there were 6,542 young people aged 13-19 years living in the ECAD Area in East Cork (ECAD, 2002). While age specific statistics are not available yet from the 2006 Census, the population of the ECAD area increased by 13.7% during 2002-2006, which is significantly above the comparative National, County and Provincial figures (ECAD, December, 2006). Figures on enrolment numbers from the Department of Education and Science (2006) for second level schools in East Cork Services are the numbers of young people in education in the area by school and by gender (Appendix 4). In general, the age at second level school ranges from 12 to 19. However, it is important to note that these young people attending these schools in East Cork are drawn from a much wider catchment area including Mayfield, Mallow, Midleton, Ballyvourney, Cork city and even Watergrasshill and Fermoy.

Young people in five East Cork towns (Midleton, Youghal, Cobh, Glanmire and Carrigaline) were involved through the Transition Year (TY) Programme in 12 East Cork Second Level Schools (as there was no uptake for transition year in one second level school). 5th Year and Transition Year students participated in the project. The Youghal Youthreach project and 3 Area Youth Projects including the Midleton and Carrigaline Youth Area Projects and Cobh Youth Services (Appendix 2) involved all the Second Level Schools. Youthreach and 3 Area Youth Projects in the ECAD area meant that a cross-section of young people from all social and socio-economic backgrounds would be included. Figure 1 illustrates how young people were involved at the different stages of the project.

Figure 1: Involvement of Young People

The Skit Day Analysis of Survey - Validation Groups

As shown, the first stage in the process of involvement was an exploratory youth survey which was followed by the youth conference. The Street. A range of other activities flowed from the survey and conference.
The Process of Involving Young People

All the schools and youth groups were contacted directly before the summer break in 2005. Meetings took place with Principals and TY Co-ordinators in the schools and Youth Workers in the projects. All were provided with an Information Pack which gave an outline of the conference event. By June 2005 all schools were on board and ready to participate in September when follow up calls were made and in each area where possible the local youth worker was introduced as the liaison person.

The young people were invited to participate and asked to complete a survey questionnaire individually first. It was explained that the survey was about young people in the East Cork Area. Consent to participate was voluntary and on the basis that information gathered would be treated confidentially within the schools and youth projects and would be used only in working to meet their needs. When compiled each group would receive feedback through the youth workers. Following completion of the questionnaires, the young people moved into small groups to talk about what came up for them and common issues. The TY Co-ordinators and Youth Workers informed the young people about the idea of a conference and invited them to consider representing these group responses in a public way “to a community of people including other young people, adults who are interested in working with there is finding ways to meet their needs, representatives of other youth organisations who have experience in their own communities of working with young people”. A list of suggestions were provided to facilitate other young people to think about ways of presenting that involved creative methods such as drama, music, poster, sculpture, painting, film, maps and oral presentations. Everyone who completed the questionnaires was involved in deciding what would be said at the conference and how it would be presented. At the conference there was a smaller representative group of 10 to 15 members from each of the larger groups.

THE EXPLORATORY SURVEY

The survey is not a stand alone research study and was not intended to be. As part of a larger process, it was a means of starting a discussion that would lead to an opportunity for the young people to present their thoughts, feelings and views in a local public forum i.e. the conference. In keeping with the goals of the conference, the survey sought to give the young people in East Cork a voice through which they could express their views on the adequacy of current facilities, their usual activities and experiences and future wishes. The qualitative focus of the survey facilitated this by allowing the respondents to express their views free from the predefined structure inherent in closed questionnaires and free from the assumptions and influence of adult views. Research designs with a qualitative, exploratory or preliminary nature are used to establish an exploratory research of this type (Knobloch, 1993). The survey was carried out throughout September 2005.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey questions were drawn directly from conversations with young people about adequacy of facilities, current experiences and a broad unlimited with the idea of a conference and invited them to consider representing these group responses in a public way “to a community of people including other young people, adults who are interested in working with there is finding ways to meet their needs, representatives of other youth organisations who have experience in their own communities of working with young people”. A list of suggestions were provided to facilitate other young people to think about ways of presenting that involved creative methods such as drama, music, poster, sculpture, painting, film, maps and oral presentations. Everyone who completed the questionnaires was involved in deciding what would be said at the conference and how it would be presented. At the conference there was a smaller representative group of 10 to 15 members from each of the larger groups.

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The Survey Findings

Overall there were 702 responses to the questionnaire from participating young people. As Table 1 shows, most of the respondents were from Midleton. As illustrated in Appendix 4, second level school population numbers were highest for Midleton. Some 56% of the questionnaires were completed by young people in the 13-15 age-group which would be expected as most of the respondents were in transition year in the second level schools. Ages of the young people were not recorded for the Youthreach group. With the exception of Youghal (48.2%), response rates were high for all the second level schools ranging from 85% to 100%. Some 90% of the trainees in Youthreach participated.

Table 1: Number of Respondents by Town, Youth Group/School and by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>School/Group Name</th>
<th>No. aged 13-15</th>
<th>No. aged 16-18</th>
<th>Age not recorded</th>
<th>School total No.</th>
<th>Town total No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrigtwohill</td>
<td>St. Aloysius College*</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrigtwohill Area Youth Project</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>Colaiste Muire</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrignafoy Community College</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glanmire</td>
<td>Colaiste an Phiarasaigh</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glanmire Community College</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midleton</td>
<td>St. Mary's High School</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CBS Secondary School</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midleton College</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Coleman's Community College</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midleton Youth Project</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>Schools: Colaiste Eoin /Loreto /CBS Yougah Area Youth Project Youthreach</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youghal Area Youth Project</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youthreach</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td>393</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* St. Aloysius College is an all female school.

* As a result of changes made to this question by one organisation, the responses could not be included.

Table 2: Adequate facilities in each town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Group Name</th>
<th>Adequate Facilities</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Adequate Facilities</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Adequate Facilities</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrigtwohill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glanmire</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midleton</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youghal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39 (5.5%)</td>
<td>555 (78.1%)</td>
<td>64 (9.1%)</td>
<td>44 (6.3%)</td>
<td>702</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* As Table 2 shows, 93.1% of respondents answered ‘no’ when they were asked if they thought there were adequate facilities in their town for young people. Only 5.5% said ‘yes’ that there were adequate facilities. A further 9.1% gave a qualified response.
There were many references to drinking alcohol in answer to this question:

“No! Young people have nowhere to go or nothing to do so they turn to underage drinking!”

“No because teenagers have nowhere to go and causes underage drinking and gets into trouble. They sit hang around dangerous places such as pontoon, Stonebridge’ I don’t think there are enough facilities in Midleton for young people, as the cinema is very old and not very big and it is expensive……. Market Green is a great place to shop for young people - but not at night time. Most of young people get bored and so many of them decide to drink under age.”

“No because most young people hang in the same spot and usually get into trouble. Because of boredom. They also get depressed because of no facilities and end up in a bit of danger like vandalism getting drunk or dealing with drugs.”

“No I do not because if there were, you would not see people you see on the streets drinking smoking, dealing etc.”

“No, there are facilities for younger children such as playground + there are pubs for over 18s but nothing for the teenage population!”

“No. Because there are absolutely no facilities young people have nothing to do but smoke drink.”

“No - because there is nothing for teenagers which leads to people drinking and smoking”

“Cobh has very inadequate facilities. There is nothing for young Adults to do! You can go for a walk or go drinking and that is the sad truth.”

“No I don’t + I think this is obvious. As in the amount of people you see on the streets drinking smoking, dealing etc.”

“No. Young people/teenagers in Glanmire and Youghal have nothing to do……. this can lead to underage drinking in forests and parks”

They also chose to make other comments about this in response to the question:

“No, there is nothing for teenagers to do, that’s why people take drugs”

“No. There is no proper youth centre or anything. Everywhere we go we get told to move.”

“No. We have no place to go in the evening. We just have to hang around, which annoys old people. We have no proper place to hang around.”

“No I’m either too young or too old for any facilities around here”

“No! Shock Horror. ….” These are facilities for children i.e. primary school children but BONE for teenagers”

“No, there’s no swimming pool, not even a youth club so people have nowhere else to hang out other than the street”

In many cases ‘no’ was emphasised by use of large print and exclamation marks. This is illustrated by the following examples which are colour coded as follows to indicate each of the five towns (Glanmire, Cobh, Youghal, Carrigtwohill and Midleton)

“NO!!! There is nothing here whatsoever. Nothing at all. Not even a little thing to do. Do something!!!”

“No. No place for young people.”

“No way. Not at all. Too many pubs, restaurants, no sheltered areas to go”

“No absolutely not!”

“No. There is Nothing to do at all!!”

“No!!! “No there is nowhere to go”

“No. There is absolutely nothing to do.”

“No. No place for young people”

“No!!! Shock Horror. ….” There are facilities for children i.e. primary school children but BONE for teenagers”

“Absolutely nothing”

“No. There is nothing to do except to lie down the field and talk on sunny days & there is no where to socialise with my peers!”

“No because most of the time we just hang around by fields and walls.”

In Cobh, “For my age group I don’t feel there are adequate facilities. I used to be a member of a drama group but due to lack of funds have closed down. I feel bored everyday.” And Youghal “No, there are no facilities for young people here in Youghal”

In Midleton, a common response was “no, there is nothing except a cinema and a pool hall”. These examples illustrate this further:

“no, midleton has no adequate facilities because all people do is go walking around the town the only facilities in midleton is fall admits it’s a pool hall & that’s all there is & it’s boring”

“No! There isn’t only one place to go and that’s the pool hall, most people who go out and just go drinking because there is nowhere else to go”

“No, the Guards and the Council are constantly giving out about the amount of underage drinking but realistically there is not much else to do if you don’t play pool!”

Reference to fields, corners and walls were made in a number of responses to Question 1 Carrigtwohill:

“No, there is not a lot to do except to lie down the field and talk on sunny days & there is no where to socialise with my peers!”

“No because most of the time we just hang around by fields and walls.”

These strong and definitive reactions to our question spoke for themselves and provide insight into the feelings of young people about this issue. In many of the responses further information was given. References were made to a number of other factors.

In Midleton, common responses were “no, there is nothing except a cinema and a pool hall”. These examples illustrate this further:

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These strong and definitive reactions to our question speak for themselves and provide insight into the feelings of young people about this issue. In many of the responses further information was given. References were made to a number of other factors.
We were struck by the large number of references to drinking alcohol in the responses. Yet we did not specifically ask those young people about drinking alcohol. The young people themselves were making the link between the lack of facilities, feelings of boredom, depression, danger and drinking alcohol. A large scale national study on the mental health of young people also highlights the link that young people make between a lack of recreational activities in their communities to feelings of frustration, boredom and misuse of drugs and alcohol (National Suicide Foundation, 2004).

We believe that the comments of these young people about alcohol need to be framed in the national trial context where under-age drinking is ranked as the highest among 35 European countries in relation to the number of teenagers who regularly binge drink and the second highest in reported regular drunkenness (ESPAD, 2003) cited in National Children’s Office, May, 2005, p.11). These comments provide us with some insight into young people’s feelings and views, and the validation groups’ comments provide clarification and additional perspectives on the issue of drinking alcohol.

For example, this is what the Cobh validation group told us:

“Drinking happens a lot in Cobh. If friends are drinking you have nothing else to do other than drink.”

When asked if there was peer pressure to drink they felt there wasn’t that but “just nothing else to do” although one questionnaire respondent in Cobh says “My associates drink and it’s hard for me not to.”

In the Carrigtwohill validation group, they said “all young people in Carrig drink, these places are not safe, and we drink because it’s hard for me not to.”

When asked if there was peer pressure to drink they felt there wasn’t that but “nothing else to do other than drink”.

In Glanmire, in relation to this:

“No there is nothing to do except drink alcohol. There were making the link between the lack of facilities, feelings of boredom and peer pressure”.

Another comment was about underage drinking “12 years is important age for something to do... you’re very vulnerable”.

The Glanmire validation group told us “People who don’t go out are not interested in drinking and there no alternative” and Midleton, “Drinking is an issue. Nothing to do but drink”.

**"YES" RESPONSES**

A number of respondents who expressed the view “yes” that there were adequate facilities also qualified their response with unsolicited extra information or explanation. For example, a number of young people felt that although there were facilities in their area these were connected to sporting activities:

“Yes I think there is adequate facilities in the area but they are nearly all sporting facilities”

“There is for sports but that’s it.”

“Yes there are facilities for young people for example the community hall, the pitch”

“Yes, Soccer club, G.A.A., Rugby etc”

“No there’s nothing to do if you don’t play sports”

“Yes we have adequate facilities in midleton. We have many sports which we can choose from. We have a soccer club, GAA clubs midleton and ballinscuragh. We have a rugby club, golf club and pitch and putt club. The pitch and putt club is constantly being vandalised”.

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Activity

**In Youghal, a “yes” to this question it was felt must be made by “a lad into sports... plenty of sports in Youghal if you’re into sport... or maybe someone older, 17-18, who can get into pubs & so has something to do”**

In Midleton, likewise the validation group members agreed that there is “nothing to do unless you do sports” and “there’s loads to do if you play sports”.

Other Responses

Some 9.1% of responses to question 1 were put in a category “Other”. These included “not really”, “don’t know”, “yes but could improve”, “kind of I suppose”. These responses were coded to be ambiguous, some said “no” with qualification for example with the exception of “sport” or “money” (i.e. there are not adequate facilities unless you have money).

If the participants responded to the question in terms of their own area i.e. they made reference to the place they live bring outside of the East Cork area, then these were also coded as “other”. (Appendix 5).

**ACTIVITIES AND PLACES**

The respondents were asked “if they go out when do they go?” and in responding to this question many of them mentioned particular places that they went to with friends or activities in which they participated.

**Table 3** Activities Identified by Respondents in each Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Carrigtown/ Schools/Youth group (N=140)</th>
<th>Cobh Schools (N=86)</th>
<th>Glanmire Schools (N=126)</th>
<th>Midleton Schools /Youth Groups (N=272)</th>
<th>Youghal Schools/Youth Groups (N=77)</th>
<th>Total No. Respondents (N=702)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanging around (with peers)</td>
<td>118 (84.3%)</td>
<td>76 (88.4%)</td>
<td>101 (87.8%)</td>
<td>250 (93.9%)</td>
<td>63 (81.6%)</td>
<td>537 (76.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking alcohol</td>
<td>9 (6.7%)</td>
<td>5 (5.8%)</td>
<td>2 (1.6%)</td>
<td>15 (5.5%)</td>
<td>12 (16.6%)</td>
<td>50 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool-snooker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.2%)</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobby (dance, art, music, etc.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6 (7.9%)</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>1 (1.3%)</td>
<td>9 (1.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport (pitch and putt, soccer etc)</td>
<td>21 (14.4%)</td>
<td>17 (19.8%)</td>
<td>13 (10.3%)</td>
<td>9 (3.3%)</td>
<td>8 (10.4%)</td>
<td>49 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night-time activities (dinner, band and open mic nights)</td>
<td>2 (1.4%)</td>
<td>4 (4.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.8%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>12 (8.6%)</td>
<td>5 (5.8%)</td>
<td>3 (1.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19 (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work (Baby-sitting)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (4.6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 (0.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28 (20.0%)</td>
<td>10 (11.6%)</td>
<td>9 (7.1%)</td>
<td>37 (13.6%)</td>
<td>13 (16.9%)</td>
<td>97 (13.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows the activities identified by the respondents in each town. Three young people in East Cork told us that 82.2% of them spend time “hanging around” (with friends) when they go out. This was a consistent pattern right across all the five areas consulted.

Clearly this was a popular activity for the respondents in the survey. This finding is supported by research in young people’s lives (see literature review by de Roiste and Dineen, 2005). As discussed by these researchers, “hanging around” is a normal aspect of young people’s social worlds and important for adolescent development (p.47). Some of the themes that emerged in that detailed review represent this activity as intrinsically connected to young people’s lifestyles and an important site for connecting to their peers, but also a source of enjoyment, fun and fulfilment (pp.47-48). For further discussion of this activity refer to Appendix 6.

What the validation groups said about “Hanging Around” (with friends):

“My mum asked me why I hang around town and I say where else I meant to go....the buses don’t run a lot so you can’t go to town, etc.”

This raises the issue of parents’ attitudes to hanging around. The following comments from the validation groups convey parental attitudes, elements of risk and danger from these young people’s perspectives:

“Hanging around da place with my friends and smoking and drinking getting into all sort of hanging around in big gangs”

“In east cork you can’t do this because it’s bad for hanging around”

“If you aren’t into sport and just hanging around then everything is so costly... buses, cinemas and we’re not supposed to work...because it interferes with study”

“Bus fares – reduced only up to 13...when we’re in school not supposed to work, no money of our own”

“Everything is money”

“What’s the point in having a cinema with no money... young people don’t have money”

Overall 7% of respondents mentioned being involved in sports when they went out. The percentage was highest for Cobh (13.8%) and about 10% of respondents in Glanmire and Midleton indicated that they were involved in sports “training”.

The issue of money was also raised by the validation groups in relation to sports:

“You even need money for that, we’re charged for everything”

Comments from the Glanmire group were similar to above with comments on charges for Astro Pitch of €50 per hour.

As highlighted by these comments, lack of money limits young people’s options and in effect, can exclude them from accessing commercial leisure facilities. Access to transport is also a factor...

“...the buses don’t run a lot, so you can’t go to town, etc.”

Six percent of all respondents referred to drinking as an activity when they go out. This figure is higher in Youghal at 16.6% and comments included: “At the weekend. Go crem on the streets, fairly pissed usually. Or sometimes out to pubs but we always get kicked out. Or hang around green park”

“Drinking in places where no-one can Find me and i can’t be sayin where = Bushing. Coz der’s nothin betta 4 us to do”.

The comments of 5.7% of respondents from Carrigtwohill indicate that when they are out they drink alcohol. As one young person commented: “Hang around by the shop or around the streets or town. We go drinking on strands or bushes to pass the time. I have also witnessed 12/13 year olds smoking drugs and drinking at this early age because of lack of amenities”

The Carrigtwohill validation group expressed the view that “Young people might not have told everything for fear teachers would see questionnaires.” This comment ties in with comments in the Youghal validation group when asked why they thought drinking is mentioned more in their town than in others in the survey.

The Youghal group commented: “Parents telling us not to go into pubs..... Not go to drinking but we want to for the socialising side of it....a few drinks to relax”

The members of the validation group in Youghal felt that this quote: “All the weekend. Go rounds around the place, then just hang around the streets, fairly pissed usually or sometimes out to pubs but we always get kicked out” (13-15 yrs old in response to question two) “is like what adults think young people get up to more than we do”

When asked why they thought drinking was mentioned more in Youghal than in other towns, they agreed the following: “we don’t really care what people think, so better to be honest about it”

They made reference to another town in East Cork having a worse reputation “but maybe they hide it or try to.”

Clearly the attitude in this group was that there is an issue around young people drinking alcohol it is better to be honest if we want to do something and get something going for young people.

In response to the following quote: “Well in the night time I don’t really only do my friends go to East Cork at night. I don’t drink but most of my friends do. And I don’t see the point, I’m ashamed to hang around with them when they are drinking” (13-15 yrs old in Youghal) the validation group commented, “It takes a lot for someone to say no I don’t want to drink. That person should have somewhere to go. This quotation should be focussed on”.

Few of the young people mentioned hobbies such as dance, art or music in the context of “going out”. As our focus was on young people’s activities when they go out, home based hobbies would have been included.

As the Table shows, 13.4% were involved in other activity and in Carrigtwohill this figure is highest at 30%. For example: “spinning around in cars with fellas’” and spinning around at place with different people, nothing to do really!” This was also mentioned by Youghal and Midleton respondents (“...go spinin in cars”)

The Youghal validation group explained this activity to us as follows: “All the younger girls spin around in cars with fellas, they might not know the fellas, they do it whether they have something to do or not but (having something to do) does lessen the risks”.

The validation group responded to the comment “Hang around or else go spinning in cars” in response to a Youghal respondent to Question 2) with “Cool people go spinning, some people get picked up in cars and think its cool to drive around town- so spinning off”.

The validation group talked about the element of danger and speeding to impress.

Other respondents in Youghal, Cobh and Midleton told us that they do not go out at all or only sometimes because of lack of activities. One Midleton respondent expressed “A lot of nights I stay home watching TV. I would like to go out more but there is nothing to do”.

DO YOU Go OUT WHEN YOU BORE OUT WEN WHEN YOU BORE OUT?
Many respondents also mentioned particular places where they go with friends to ‘hang around’. Table 4:

Location | Carrigtwohill Schools | Cobh Schools | Glanmire Schools | Midleton Schools | Youghal Schools | Total No. "hang around" (N=702)
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Specific communal area in locality | 14 (11.9%) | 19 (25%) | 18 (16.4%) | 22 (10.5%) | 14 (15.5%) | 87 (15.3%)
Cork City/Mahon Point | 50 (42.4%) | 6 (7.9%) | 43 (39%) | 10 (4.8%) | 1 (1.1%) | 110 (19.3%)
Town centre/streets | 23 (19.3%) | 31 (40.8%) | 17 (15.4%) | 114 (54.3%) | 34 (34.5%) | 219 (37.9%)
Estate | 2 (1.7%) | 7 (9.2%) | 5 (4.5%) | 7 (3.3%) | 21 (3.4%) | 35 (2.6%)
Friends' house | 5 (4.2%) | 31 (40.8%) | 23 (20.9%) | 14 (6.6%) | 20 (21.7%) | 93 (13.4%)
Fast food outlet (e.g., McDonald’s) | 7 (5.9%) | 0 | 0 | 47 (22.2%) | 1 (1.1%) | 53 (7.5%)
Town Park | 13 (10.5%) | 12 (15.3%) | 1 (0.9%) | 27 (12.9%) | 38 (8.6%) | 87 (10.3%)
Sports facility (football pitch, etc) | 10 (8.6%) | 8 (10.5%) | 25 (22.7%) | 6 (2.8%) | 2 (1.1%) | 60 (8.5%)
Pool hall | 1 (0.8%) | 0 | 0 | 69 (32.8%) | 0 | 70 (7.1%)
Pubs | 0 | 0 | 2 (1.8%) | 0 | 0 | 2 (0.3%)
Shops/shopping centre (Supervalue, etc) | 32 (27.1%) | 35 (42.1%) | 28 (25.4%) | 15 (7.2%) | 0 | 96 (13.6%)
Video streaming service (e.g., Netflixt) | 0 | 0 | 11 (9.5%) | 4 (1.9%) | 0 | 15 (2.2%)
Other | 5 (4.2%) | 8 (10.5%) | 7 (6.4%) | 7 (3.3%) | 4 (2.2%) | 31 (4.4%)
Midleton | 22 (18.6%) | 0 | 0 | 3 (1.4%) | 25 (16.3%) | 30 (4.3%)
No location specified | 3 (2.5%) | 2 (2.6%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 (0.7%)
Pubs (Pubtrail Only) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 (35.6%) | 0 | 32 (4.5%)

As Table 4 shows, 37.9% of the respondents told us that they “hang around” the town centres and streets. This applies particularly to the towns of Midleton (34.7%), Youghal (35%) and Cobh (40.6%) and less so for Carrigtwohill and Glanmire who spend time in Cork City/Mahon Point (42.4% and 39% respectively). This would be expected for geographical reasons as these latter locations are more accessible and travel costs would be less.

For example: “We walk around the streets or go into greenpark but its cold and boring, cafes close at 6 pm and there is no toilet facilities, you can’t go anywhere for even a hot drink or a chat.” Some 50.8% of the Youghal respondents said that they hang around Perks Amusement Arcade.

Oftentimes, in relation to Midleton is the high number of respondents who mentioned Fat Alberts, the local pool hall (32.8%) which we found was no longer open at the validation stage. Some 22.4% of Midleton respondents mentioned McDonald’s as a place to hang around. Sports facilities are places to hang around for 10.4% of respondents in our survey. For Glanmire, this figure was higher at 22.7%.

What Respondents’ Want in Their Town for Young People in the Future

In responding to this question many gave a ’wish list’ of the facilities and activities what they would like to see in the future for their area.

Table 5 What Respondents want in their Town for Young People in the Future

| Location | Carrigtwohill Schools/Youth group (N=140) | Cobh Schools/Youth group (N=86) | Glanmire Schools/Youth group (N=126) | Midleton Schools/Youth group (N=273) | Youghal Schools/Youth group (N=77) | Total No. Respondents (N=702) |
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
A place to ‘hang around’ | 32 (22.8%) | 8 (9.3%) | 26 (20.1%) | 55 (20.1%) | 40 (51.9%) | 161 (22.9%) |
Youth service/youth groups/community groups | 32 (22.8%) | 3 (3.5%) | 16 (12.1%) | 33 (12.1%) | 10 (13%) | 94 (13.1%) |
Recreational facilities (cinema, leisure centre/arcade, pool hall, restaurants) | 55 (39.3%) | 61 (70.9%) | 50 (39.7%) | 83 (29.7%) | 3 (3.9%) | 250 (35.6%) |
Sports facilities (gymnasium, pool,不断地) | 31 (22.1%) | 24 (27.9%) | 44 (34.9%) | 63 (23.1%) | 7 (9.1%) | 169 (24.1%) |
Sport activities (sports club, basketball, bowling) | 5 (3.6%) | 10 (11.6%) | 5 (3.9%) | 30 (11.6%) | 12 (16.1%) | 47 (6.6%) |
Night-time activities (discos, live band nights, karaoke, open mic nights) | 6 (4.3%) | 3 (3.5%) | 5 (3.9%) | 88 (32.2%) | 30 (39.7%) | 132 (18.8%) |
Creative activities (dance, drama groups, music classes) | 5 (3.6%) | 9 (10.5%) | 6 (4.8%) | 3 (1.1%) | 3 (1.3%) | 26 (3.7%) |
Educational activities (first aid, language classes) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
Shopping | 3 (2.1%) | 5 (5.8%) | 15 (11.9%) | 9 (3.3%) | 2 (2.6%) | 33 (4.7%) |
Other (cultural activities, festivals, beach parties) | 19 (13.6%) | 12 (13.9%) | 10 (7.9%) | 34 (12.5%) | 21 (27.7%) | 96 (13.7%) |
Use Activities or Facilities for young people | 16 (11.4%) | 16 (18.6%) | 18 (14.2%) | 49 (18.4%) | 15 (17.3%) | 105 (14.9%) |
A Place to Hang Around

Facilities such as playing pitches/astroturf, a sports complex, indoor sports facilities, social facilities (incentive and leisure), pool hall and a disco in the town centre were all mentioned as facilities which Young people in Midleton want. The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The Cobh figure is low at 8.9%. Somewhere to hang out and relax and have a laugh is frequently referred to as a place without ‘drink’. The comments of 20.1% of respondents from the Midleton schools and youth project indicated that in the future they would like to see some place for young people to hang around:

“a place for us to go with our friends. To have fun and where we won’t get kicked out”

“I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

Of the 34.9% of respondents from the Glanmire schools who wanted sports facilities, 40.0% indicated that they wanted a swimming pool. Of the 27.9% of respondents who indicated that they would like to see sports facilities, a third indicated that they wanted a swimming pool in their area. Some 8.8% of Youghal respondents mentioned sports facilities although 15.6% wanted time activities such as piano lessons, music, big enough to fir large groups, cheap, buy snacks, tea and coffee, hot-choc. “a cafe for teenagers only/youth club cafe, movies, chairs, night clubs, coffee or tea or a place to get away from music live etc.”

“I just want to go where everyone can meet up and hang out, karaoke, open mic nights, discos and a disco in the da ta centre”

In Cobh the figure is low at 9.3%. Somewhere to hang out and relax and have a laugh is frequently referred to as a place without ‘drink’. In Youghal and Midleton the numbers are substantially higher at 10% and 32.3% respectively. Of the 32.2% of respondents from the Midleton schools and youth project that indicated that they would like to see more night time activities for young people in the area, most (81.8%) indicated that they would like to see discos or nightclubs. For example:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if its raining and more discos and evets to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The Glanmire validation group responded as follows to the quotation by a respondent “‘anything at all’ in answer to question three “Things are so bad here that anything at all will do”

In Carrigtwohill “All we want is something small, people ask for something small cause they think this is what they’ll get”

I think that was the best quote:

“Somewhere safe to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”

The validation group felt that this was the best quote:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The validation group felt that this was the best quote:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The validation group felt that this was the best quote:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The validation group felt that this was the best quote:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

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“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

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“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

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“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The validation group felt that this was the best quote:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

The Cobh validation group said “Best solution is a mixture of town centre/place (“a place to go if there was something wrong in town”) and a drop-in centre/place (“a place to go with light and heat to meet with our friends, make more friends, we need to get off the streets”).

The validation group felt that this was the best quote:

“...I’d love if they built a hall or somewhere young people can hang out on a Friday night if it’s raining and more discos and events to keep us off all these streets”

“...I would like to see a public pool being built in Midleton and also a place for people to hang out with friends e.g. a cafe shop.

“...Better facilities like a public swimming pool or an arcade”

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The validation group felt that this was the best quote:...
THE CONFERENCE:

Exit the Street: A Place of Our Own

The conference was held in Midleton, East Cork and was attended by 250 people. Of these, 150 participants were young people from the second level schools, Youthreach and Area Youth Projects. Exit the Street was part of a consultation process that placed local young people at its core and head directly from them about their views, their issues and their needs. A total of 12 presentations were made by young people using creative methods such as film, drama and poster presentations. Conference workshops involved the conference participants working in smaller groups to identify options and follow-up actions. The conference was attended by Teachers, Parents, Youth Workers (both paid and voluntary), representatives of community groups, youth service providers and their managers, politicians and health service providers.

The Planning Process and Organisation of the Conference

A key element in planning the conference was the setting up of an organising committee that comprised of representatives of organisations in East Cork who had an interest and a role to play in meeting the needs of young people in the area. This Committee brought ideas, feelings, opinions, information, useful contacts and decision-making skills from young people through those who worked closely with them in the community. This enabled both adults and young people together to have a creative input into this Youth Conference with the common goal of promoting the wellbeing of young people.

Initially there were three representatives from each of the three main urban centres in the area; Cobh, Midleton and Youghal. This expanded to include Carrigtwohill, The East Cork Traveller Group and at a later stage it was broadened to include Glanmire. The Organising Committee started with nine community members, the manager of the LDSP Programme (ECAI) and the consultant working for ECAI with responsibility for the planning of the conference. The group grew to include 16 members (Appendix 7) and met to make decisions on all aspects of the conference.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

The following creative methods were used by the young people in their presentation to the Conference:

Films (5)  Drama/Role-play (2)  PowerPoint (3)  Poster Presentations (2)

Some groups as well as being involved in the above made sculpture (1), drawings (1), maps (2), photography (2) and undertook project work (3). Young people included music in many of the presentations.

Film: What is Youghal like for Young People?

Young People from Lomto Secondary School and Colaiste Eoin together with members of Youghal Area Youth Project presented their 8 minute Film. What is Youghal Like for Young People? In it they talked to young people and adults and looked at their town through the eyes of a young person.

Drama Presentation: St Mary’s High School

A Drama Presentation from St Mary’s High School, Midleton, followed. In this “freeze frame” where the action was frozen, as in a video, to allow the audience to really see what is going on, we had two spaces; the first New, nowhere to go and the second; A Vision for the Future.

Role play: Colaiste Maire Cobh

A short role play and PowerPoint presentation from Colaiste Maire Cobh gave us a look at the town of Cobh through the eyes of some of its young people, at the places they can now go, where they can now hang out.

All three of these first presentations expressed a clear message about the lack of facilities for them in each of their home towns.

PowerPoint Presentation: Midleton College

A PowerPoint Presentation from Midleton College Transition Year students gave a breakdown on what they do in their leisure time, listing what is available to them and what they would like to see happening in the future.

Film: Youthreach Youghal

A short Film from Youthreach Youghal expressed their feelings of being neglected through interviews with young people from their project and a look at the town of Youghal. It focused first on its beautiful public gardens and sculptures and then on the abrupt lack of places for young people to simply be without being asked to move along.

Film: St Coleman’s Community College

This was followed by a film about alcohol and young people made by 5th year students at St. Coleman’s Community College, Midleton. This film dramatically shows what young people can get up to in a secluded well known area in Midleton town when there is nowhere else to go and nothing else to do for kicks.

Drama As Gaeilge

Finally in this sequence a short presentation, a Drama As Gaeilge from Colaiste an Pharsaigh, Glanmire focused on the issue of alcohol and driving demonstrating these young people’s awareness of this issue in the community.

In all of these presentations, the issues that affect young people are focused on and attention is drawn to the lack of alternatives which are available for the young population in East Cork.

Film: Carrigwohill

Students from St. Aloysius Girls Secondary School, Carrigwohill together with the local Youth Project expressed their views on what is an offer for young people in their town with its burgeoning population, presented through the medium of film.

In addition to all of the above, members individually and in smaller groups took on a number of responsibilities and roles. The Youth Workers involved themselves directly with schools and with Transition Year students and their Co-ordinators, both in consulting young people about their needs and in preparing the presentation of their views to the conference. The degree of involvement varied depending on need, take-up and time available. This helped Youth Workers to forge new links with young people through schools. Relationships with the Health Service Executive (HSE) were further developed and resulted in funding a chairperson for the event and also professional public relations support through the Communications Office of the HSE.
The students from Glanmire Community College articulated the lack of facilities in Glanmire and the problems which arose because of this. They delivered a PowerPoint presentation and made a map showing what facilities they have and what they would like. They showed that there are many places in their communities where young people are not welcome, accused of loitering and asked to move on, with no alternatives provided.

Film: “Before All Else”

The final presentation representing the views and issues that affect the lives of young people in East Cork came from CBS Secondary School in Midleton. This film called “Before All Else” addressed the link between the lack of facilities for young people in Midleton and the rise of depression and suicide amongst young people.

Peer Support Education Programme

Three young people from Midleton who are involved in a community-based Peer Support Education Programme explained how they had arrived to their present focus on setting up a Youth Café in Midleton. Each of them described their experience of suicide and how it affected them as young people in this community. They arrived to their present focus on setting up a Youth Café in Midleton. Each of them described their experience of suicide and how it affected them as young people in this community. They described the help they get from being involved in the Programme, set up locally with support from the HSE.

A representative of the Peer Support Education Programme spoke about their aspiration to create a space in Midleton where young people are welcome to just be themselves, a place with an ‘open door’ policy. She described the work they were doing in raising awareness and locating funding and stressed that young people need to get actively involved in getting the ‘Open Door’ up and running.

The conference “was really good as you got a chance to mix with other young people from other schools... share information in the workshops about our town with others from other towns” (one conference participant)

Following the presentations, workshops entitled Looking to the Future took place. The participants were invited to focus on an action and particularly on what each young person could themselves contribute to that action. Young people were asked to divide into groups according to the colour code on their ID badges. These were given to all young people on registering an arrival each name badge had a coloured sticker). Each participant was asked to form a group with their same colour fellow participants. This ensured a mixing of young people from different groups, schools and towns in as far as possible. Each group was assigned an experienced facilitator, usually a youth or development worker, and a note-taker. The following questions were addressed by each group:

1. Where are we now?
2. What do we want?
3. What needs to happen to get what you want?

With a roving microphone feedback was heard from each group. All of the workshops stated a preference for a Youth Café type place providing the kinds of activities and services described by the conference speakers. The Workshop Outcomes proposed a variety of ways forward to achieve their aim. The following were the most popular suggestions:

1. Setting up a Youth Council
2. Carrying out a survey
3. Campaigning through petitions
4. Fundraising
5. Finding a Building
6. Local Authority
7. Help from Parents

Core Conference Themes:
Contributions by Guest Presenters

Democracy and Structures for Representing Young People

The Conference was officially opened by Minister Síle Ó íosaí, Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science with special responsibility for adult education, youth affairs and educational disadvantage. In her address, the Minister made reference to the importance of democracy to young people and encouraged the promotion of democracy in schools through the development of students’ councils. She referred to the development of Youth Cafés as a “catalyst for change” and spoke about her own familiarity with these centres through her contact with The Hub in Ennis. She also emphasised the importance of research and its influence on policy development. Finally she encouraged feedback from this conference to each group as The Dail Committee and Dáil na nÓg.

Youth Cafes: Ideas and Information - The Way Forward in East Cork?

Learning from the Scottish Experience – The Prince’s Trust, Scotland

The first of the keynote speakers was Mr Bill Anderson of The Prince’s Trust in Scotland where over 100 youth cafés operate. Bill is the Manager of the Prince’s Trust Highlands and Islands (Scotland), and has been involved in the Youth Cafes in Action Project which has established a network of 30 youth cafés across the North West of Scotland.

Two key elements in the success of Youth Cafes were highlighted:

1. Involving young people from the start; “find out what they want, get them involved in planning and running the café”.
2. Having sufficient adult volunteers.
The overall aim was to build the confidence and skills of young people, and give them further opportunity to express their thoughts, opinions and ideas through the medium of film. Working with filmmakers and staff from Cork Film Centre and local youth groups, young people developed an innovative and exciting project. The project began in March 2006 with a series of one day workshops for young people. These took place in six locations in East Cork throughout March and April. Youghal, Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Inch Killiney and Glanmire. Workshops were designed for groups of up to eight participants. They demonstrated pre-production (script development, storyboard, planning, production (use of camera, sound, basic lighting, directing actors), and post-production (editing and sound design). Participants made a short film on the day. All these involved were invited to submit a proposal for a longer film. The proposals ranged from Short Fiction to Documentary, Experimental and Music Video. Out of this came two substantial films ranging from seven minutes to thirty five minutes in length.

The film project went on through the summer and autumn months of 2006. It culminated in a celebration Gala Night where all the films were screened. This was hosted by Cork County Council at the Convention Centre, Cork. It involved approximately 150 young people and accompanying adults including youth workers, teachers, public representatives and parents. The Gala Event was a showcase for ten short films written, directed, filmed, edited and acted by the young people of East Cork. They included funny and serious films, dramas and documentaries and in some of them, for example “Alessa’s Letter”, “Broken Dreams” and “The Passenger”, young people raised some of the issues which affect their lives such as isolation and suicide.

The ten films were introduced by the young film makers themselves. On the night 114 young film makers were awarded certificates in recognition of their achievements. Plans are in place to also showcase these films locally in 2007.

The Youth Exchange Project

Through the conference, links were formed with the Prince’s Trust in Scotland, Highlands and Islands, a UK charity that helps young people overcome barriers and get their lives working. From conversations with this organisation it became apparent that young people had similar concerns and there were opportunities for sharing of practices and experiences. For example, the Prince’s Trust has successfully developed a network of youth cafés. Since the conference, a two way exchange of ideas and information has been developed for the benefit of young people in both geographical areas. This kind of transnational co-operation provides opportunities, not just for young people, youth workers and organisations, but also for the sharing of experience between communities as a whole.

In April 2006, ECAD, in conjunction with the East Cork Youth Network (ECYN), organised a study visit to Scotland looking at youth cafés, their structures, functions, organisational make-up and management. A group of ten people, youth workers and young people, representing the East Cork area spent three days in the Highlands of Scotland looking at youth cafés and discussing the design of an ongoing programme. This visit was supported by HSE, Youghal Youth Committee, Cobh Youth Services and ECAD. In late November, Bill Anderson, Area Manager of the Prince’s Trust in Scotland, visited East Cork and met with young people involved in the Film Project, attended a Youth Council meeting in Glanmire where plans for a youth café and youth forum were discussed. He met with young people involved in the Film Project, attended a Youth Council meeting in Glanmire where plans for a youth café and youth forum were discussed.

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Glanmire, Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Midleton and Youghal: was held in glorious sunshine and enjoyed by young people from their collective work as part of the East Cork Youth Network. It outside Ballycotton in East Cork. The day was a celebration of workers and volunteers got together on Ballynamona Beach there was lots to do and the food was great. “It was so Fun we mixed with a lot of people, the DJ was great and the food was lovely.” “I though the party was great craic, we organised informal gatherings like the skit day, developing youth exchange links and ultimately developing youth cafés in East Cork towns. At this meeting young people talked about their ideas. They asked questions, They heard about youth developments in Scotland. They heard about how the youth exchange links and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other’s countries and cultures. Exchanges between Programme countries can be bilateral, unilateral or multilateral. They must take place in one of the Programme countries involved in the project. Exchanges do not necessarily imply reciprocity, i.e. the sending group need not become the host group in a second planned exchange. In this case, a separate application must be submitted for the second phase. In some cases multilateral exchanges can be intricate, i.e. the entire exchange group moves through several countries during the activity. What is a youth exchange? A youth exchange project (LEARGAS) brings together groups of young people from different backgrounds from two or more countries, providing them with an opportunity to discuss and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other’s countries and cultures. Exchanges between Programme countries can be bilateral, unilateral or multilateral. They must take place in one of the Programme countries involved in the project. Exchanges do not necessarily imply reciprocity, i.e. the sending group need not become the host group in a second planned exchange. In this case, a separate application must be submitted for the second phase. In some cases multilateral exchanges can be intricate, i.e. the entire exchange group moves through several countries during the activity. Summary of activities It is clear that an “East Cork Youth Rep Group” is a good initiative. The work which must be done if this is to proceed must be named, quantified and supported. These initiatives need to become the host group in a second planned exchange. In this case, a separate application must be submitted for the second phase. In some cases multilateral exchanges can be intricate, i.e. the entire exchange group moves through several countries during the activity. Both the young people who participated and the members of the East Cork Youth Network wanted to continue to build on these contacts and relationships developed through this Skit day. Following this event, a gathering of 10 young people representing the different areas in East Cork took place. Members of the ECCYN SKIT Working group and Bill Anderson of The Prince’s Trust in Scotland also attended this gathering. The event was hosted by Youghal Area Youth Project on Friday 24th November 2006. The day was a celebration of young people from East Cork young people to adults. Their work might involve organising informal gatherings like the skit day, developing youth exchange links and ultimately developing youth cafés in East Cork towns. At this meeting young people talked about their ideas. They asked questions, They heard about youth developments in Scotland. They heard about how the youth exchange links and confront various themes, whilst learning about each other’s countries and cultures. Exchanges between Programme countries can be bilateral, unilateral or multilateral. They must take place in one of the Programme countries involved in the project. Exchanges do not necessarily imply reciprocity, i.e. the sending group need not become the host group in a second planned exchange. In this case, a separate application must be submitted for the second phase. In some cases multilateral exchanges can be intricate, i.e. the entire exchange group moves through several countries during the activity.
agreeing on mission statements and policies and procedures. This is a very exciting project for the area and is a first step towards establishing a Youth Café” (Linda Monaghan, Youth Worker).

Cobh
Cobh Youth Services successfully applied for €300,000 to the Department of the Environment. This money was specifically to upgrade facilities where establishing youth cafés in existing premises. “Cobh Youth Services will operate out of its new refurbished Youth Centre and Youth Café in the next few weeks” (Catherine O Connor, Youth Worker).

Midleton
In Midleton, the Peer Support Education Project have made strides in putting together the following proposal for a Youth Health Café for 13–18 year olds because of an ongoing awareness in the local community of the need to address issues facing young people. In 2003, the Southern Health Board Peer Support Education Initiative started and is ongoing. In 2005 East Cork Area Development (ECAD) surveyed transition year students. The findings were noted and research trips were organized to The Gaf, Galway and Mallow Youth Café.

The Mission statement:
The Midleton Youth Health Café project works in partnership with young people to support them in the development of their good health and well-being in a drug and alcohol free environment. The aims are as follows:
- Provide a safe adolescent friendly place for young people to meet and interact
- Improve young people’s awareness of good health practice and health related issues
- Allow young people the opportunity to benefit from roles of responsibility
- Offer direct access to health information with links to all existing provider agencies
- Enhance the community by providing a desirable and important service

Youghal
“ At the moment we, Youghal Area Youth Project, have secured our funding €162,000 for a youth café in Youghal for the next two years and we are looking to include the café in the League of the Cross Hall when it is newly refurbished and managed by Cumann na nOlaimhe, Youghal Community Development Project” (Nicola Lucey, Youth Worker)

Glanmire
Glanmire Youth Council was established after young people from the area expressed their frustration on a ‘Prime Time Special’ that was shown on RTE highlighting the high level of anti-social behaviour in the area. They felt that certain aspects of the programme were taken out of context, and that the circumstance that led to this behaviour was not given adequate consideration. The group aim to reflect the views of their peers and are keen to show the strengths of youth as well as acknowledge the problems that exist. The council, after much consultation and research strongly feel that a Youth Café is the most appropriate way to highlight the strengths and talents of youth as well as a practical and positive way of reducing anti-social behaviour. The Youth Council and Glanmire Film Club have collaborated (through the East Cork Youth Film Project 2006) highlighting some of the problems that youth face in their community. It is based on the real life experiences of the young people. Glanmire Area Community Association has also undertaken to assist the Youth Council in exploring the possibilities of providing a suitable location for a Youth Café. Several options are currently being considered and discussions are ongoing with local political representatives. (Brian O’Toole, Youth Worker)
Young people themselves made references to being misunderstood by parents and other adults. As one young person expressed, “I am not allowed to go out because I am not allowed to hang around” and another, “you can’t socialise outside school cause your parents don’t allow. Parents don’t understand.” In the validation groups, young people referred to the negative attitudes by adults in their communities in general to “hanging around.” As discussed by Hall, Coffey and Williamson (1999) “young people’s occupation of public space understandably attracts attention. It has been a historically recurrent source of adult concern and in as contentious today as ever.” (1999, p. 306). Researchers such as O’Kernan and Keely (1998, p.25) note that young people are frequently negatively perceived because of how they congregate, usually in groups and in highly visible public places. As expressed in our study, “the group is seen as a problem” and “hanging out street space.” While we concede that adult concerns may stem from protective/resentful and fear about safety, perhaps adults could learn more about this important activity, “hanging around.” It is evident from the young people in our work that they feel that they are seen on a danger, a threat or a hindrance. The question for us as a society is, if we do not want our young people to be on the street and in public areas, where do we want them to be?

As well as the need to create places for young people to call their own that are as they describe “safe, warm….friendly”, we need to include them in our work. When we do this, we make our communities better and safer places to live in for all of us and this gives young people a message. It lets us know that they are important people in our communities, that they are listened to and that we follow through on what they say.

Although we did not ask specifically about drinking alcohol, young people tell us that as they are concerned. They told us that they drink alcohol because they are bored, “……just nothing to do”, because of peer pressure and because they are looking for excitement. Some of them are uncomfortable about drinking around, knowing this happens and the dangers they face in dark secluded and out of the way places.

As one young person expressed, “No, nowhere I would look to go in the evenings or at night people are out on the streets with nowhere to go. Perks kick you out at nine or after, young girls are left alone in the street, it’s dangerous and you can’t socialise with your friends outside school cause your parents don’t allow. Parents don’t understand.”

In general, young people tell us that East Cork is a good place to live if you “are into sports”. This is very positive, though we noted when reading the feedback from the survey and hearing what young people said at the conference that the converse is also true; if you are not into sport there are few facilities. This is reflected in comments that ranged from “in Cobh, it’s all closed early” to “I can’t play a game because there is nowhere to go. Perks kick you out at nine or after, young girls are left alone in the street, it’s dangerous and you can’t socialise with your friends outside school cause your parents don’t allow. Parents don’t understand.”

According to the National Children’s Strategy “Children and Young People will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood” (Government of Ireland, 2000, p.57). This is in keeping with Article 31 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) which asserts children’s right to play, to develop and to enjoy the provision of leisure and recreational opportunities for them. These needs of young people have been neglected. As recently as September 2006, The Committee on the Rights of the Child 43rd Session in their Concluding Observations recommended that the Irish State “place more emphasis on the creation of facilities for children and Young People to enjoy leisure, recreational and cultural facilities” (September, 2006, p. 14).

Youth cafés type provision will not meet all their needs for places to hang around.

They tell us about the places they hang around – on the streets, in shopping centres, at swimming pools when they are available. Young people may want to be on the street as this is a place to see and be seen – it is place where things happen (Hall, Coffey and Williamson, 1999). This is part of a developmental process and promotes social identity and a sense of belonging to the community (Shannon, 2006).

In our efforts to present the whole picture, we were careful not to misrepresent these young people. We wanted to convey accurately what they were telling us through the survey, at the conference, in the workshops and in the validation groups. We do not want this report just to focus on the problems of young people. However in telling us what they want, they tell us emphatically that they do not have adequate facilities. They also tell us about their concerns and describe clearly the problems they experience, the difficulties they face and the dangers they encounter in their daily lives. These young people themselves are not negative or bleak. They are concerned.

In general we found the young people vibrant. They ‘opted in’ when given the opportunity, participated with enthusiasm, were able to communicate and express themselves orally and through film. They were willing to share their insights or bleak. They are concerned.

They are concerned. They have adequate facilities. They also tell us about their concerns and describe clearly problems “to a more holistic picture of their daily lives and experiences.” Baird (2006) who argue that we need to move away from the focus on “youth problems” to a more holistic picture of their daily lives and experiences.

Discussion: Response to the findings

Youth café type provision will not meet all their needs for places to hang out well solve underage drinking and “some will always drink”. These young people were concerned about those who do not go out because of the prevalence of binge drinking among their friends. In the validation group, it was expressed that young people are “……very vulnerable”. Sometimes they expressed feelings of shame “……I’m ashamed to hang around with them when they are drinking”. We must learn from their openness.

As well as the need to create places for young people to call their own that are as they describe “safe, warm….friendly”, we need to include them in our work. When we do this, we make our communities better and safer places to live in for all of us and this gives young people a message. It lets us know that they are important people in our communities, that they are listened to and that we follow through on what they say. In this report, we have presented a snapshot of some aspects of young people’s lives, experiences, feelings and views. We agree with authors such as Lalor and Baird (2006) who argue that in order to meet the needs young people have adequate facilities. They also tell us about their concerns and describe clearly
They are enabled to do this with the support and backing of government through policy and funding; local councils through planning for public spaces; the support of community through planning and provision of space; the support of youth workers, teachers and their organisations; and most importantly, the support of parents.

The more informed we are, the better our youth cafés will be. Exchanging information and experiences with other groups such as the Prince’s Trust is positive and has more potential. In tandem with this, young people in Scotland have tentatively shown an interest in the response of one East Cork community to suicide prevention. Programmes such as the East Cork Youth Film Project have developed confidence, promoted leadership skills and an interest in the arts.

Ultimately this is a story about East Cork young people and their communities. Parts of the story are very positive. In an effort to accentuate the positive, we must not eliminate the negatives and the issues that are of great concern to young people and to all of the people in our communities. It is a story in which we all play a part and have a role in determining what happens.

Finally, as expressed by Edwards and Hatch, “The range and quality of services and activities provided for (and with) young people is important not just for young people and the community as a whole. When young people have safe places to play in and ‘hang out’, well maintained and affordable facilities to use; activities to take part in; good quality support services to turn to and good school to go to, then their communities are also likely to feel safe vibrant and supportive for everyone” (December, 2003, p.9). This represents the kind of holistic approach where everybody is involved if young people are valued and active and a part of what is going on. If we can apply this to our communities, we will all benefit.

*our insertions

**Recommendations**

Based on the responses of young people and on our learning from this process we make the following recommendations:

**Recommendation One**

Meet the needs of young people for recreational facilities. Our work highlights the urgent need for action at local and policy level.

i. Develop more recreational facilities in the East Cork area in particular public swimming pools (Midleton) cinema (Cobh) and youth café type facilities (Carrigtwohill, Cobh, Glanmire, Midleton, Youghal).

ii. Progress the work which is already happening in the five named towns in setting up youth café type facilities and in doing so further address the needs of young people as outlined in the report for safe, youth friendly and alcohol free places to go.

iii. Access funding from Government sources. Lobby Government to follow through on commitments already made to resource recreational facilities for young people including those named above. Resources are also needed to support the process of involving young people in developing these facilities.

iv. Develop policy at local government level to protect public spaces so that there is space for recreational facilities to be developed for young people in all our towns.

**Recommendation Two**

Further develop networks for and with young people in East Cork.

i. Support the continued development of existing structures such as the East Cork Youth Network (ECYN).

ii. Continue to support young people in developing a structure/or structures which give them a representative voice, like the ‘Rep’ group. Look to models such as Donegal Youth Council and Comhairle na nOg.

iii. Encourage the development of peer-support and common interest groups in East Cork. In developing networks we create structures that encourage and enable further and continued consultation and facilitate links to other groups and programmes.

**Recommendation Three**

Forge links between schools, Youghal Youthreach Centre and community projects including youth cafés. All are working towards the well-being of young people.

**Recommendation Four**

Build confidence and skills (including leadership skills) of young people in a variety of ways.

i. Create opportunities for young people to follow through on their interests in music, drama, film and in the arts in general. In particular build on the success of the Film Project.

ii. Encourage the Arts Council and Cork County Council Arts Office to continue and to increase their investment in the arts in East Cork for young people.
RECOMMENDATION FIVE
Ensure that facilities developed are inclusive of all young people living in East Cork.

RECOMMENDATION SIX
Sharing of information is needed. This can be facilitated by:

i. Finding ways to provide feedback and updates on relevant developments to the larger population of young people in East Cork. This could be through schools, youth organisations and web sites that will keep young people informed and involved.

ii. A broadening of information to adults, including parents and teachers, such as putting reports like this in the public domain.

iii. Keep information flowing.

iv. Providing a national web based information resource for young people that links with other agencies (local, national and international) as recommended by Dail na nGh (2006).

v. The promotion of youth exchanges, including the Youth Exchange Project with Scotland, as a means of peer learning and mutual support.

RECOMMENDATION SEVEN
Address the health awareness needs of young people.

i. Provide information about:

   • Alcohol and Drug use and misuse
   • Sexual health
   • Emotional and Physical well-being
   • Social and Leadership skills

ii. Support the proposed development from the Peer Support Group for a Health Café in Midleton for young people.

iii. As young people raised concerns around drinking alcohol, establish a research brief to investigate the levels of young peoples’ engagement in underage and binge drinking in the East Cork area as a follow on to the exploratory survey. In doing this, we increase our understanding and develop strategies which involve young people.

RECOMMENDATION EIGHT
Encourage young people to be actively involved in their East Cork communities by creating opportunities for them to contribute:

i. Involving them at a younger age.

ii. Encourage young people to take different roles so that they can tackle community issues, not just including those issues that concern them directly.

iii. View young people as a resource and consult with them.

RECOMMENDATION NINE
To mobilise all members of the East Cork community:

i. To use contacts to gain support for this work with young people, in accessing buildings, getting funding, ……..

ii. To engage with public representatives asking them to support our call for greater investment in recreational facilities in the run up to the election.

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East Cork Area Development (December, 2006) Socio-economic and Demographic Analysis, ECAD, East Cork.


RECOMMENDED READING


APPENDIX 2: YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND YOUTH GROUPS

There are a wide variety of youth organizations available in Ireland, including religious, educational, sporting, and leisure groups. In East Cork, there are numerous youth organizations that serve young people in every part of the county. The majority of youth groups are affiliated to the local parishes, including the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, and other denominations. Many youth organizations are run by a board of adult volunteers, with a management committee and a youth committee. The youth committees are made up of at least some young people, who are often responsible for running the youth groups and making decisions about their activities.

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body of the voluntary youth sector. It is officially recognised as such by the 1992 Youth Act. In 2006, 94% of national youth organizations fell under the remit of NYCI through a contract or a charter. NYCI is responsible for the delivery of the National Youth Development Programme and the National Youth Development Strategy, which are supported by government funding.

Youth Work Ireland is a national voluntary membership organisation for youth work practitioners in the Republic of Ireland. They promote the values and principles of youth work and facilitate the development and support of youth work organisations and practitioners. They provide training, resources, and networking opportunities for youth workers.

East Cork Area

Located in the eastern part of the county, East Cork is bounded by the Blackwater River to the east, the River Lee to the south, and the Cork Harbour to the west. The area has a population of over 200,000 people, with a diverse range of communities, including urban and rural areas. The East Cork Area Development (ECAD) was established in East Cork in 1989 to promote economic development and social inclusion in the area. The ECAD Area Map of East Cork is included in the document for reference.

APPENDIX 3: YOUTH CENTRES

The Youth Café is a place where young people can come together in a fun and safe environment to socialise, relax, and participate in recreational activities. Youth cafés vary greatly in size, design, and the range of activities offered. There are over 100 youth cafés in Ireland, and they are located in urban and rural areas. Youth cafés provide a safe and supportive environment for young people to meet, make friends, and participate in activities that they might not otherwise have access to. They also provide opportunities for young people to develop skills, such as social, communication, and problem-solving skills.

The Youth Café Survival Guide: What is a youth café?

Youth cafés are a popular form of youth provision in Ireland, providing a wide range of activities and services for young people. They are run by a variety of organisations, including youth clubs, youth centres, and local authorities. Youth cafés are typically open from 3 to 5 days a week, with a range of activities and services available during each visit. Youth cafés are designed to be a safe and supportive environment for young people to socialise, relax, and participate in a wide range of recreational activities. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs.

Youth cafés are run by a combination of trained staff and volunteers, with a focus on providing a safe and inclusive environment for young people. They are designed to be a place where young people can come together in a fun and safe environment to socialise, relax, and participate in recreational activities. Youth cafés provide a safe and supportive environment for young people to meet, make friends, and participate in activities that they might not otherwise have access to. They also provide opportunities for young people to develop skills, such as social, communication, and problem-solving skills.

Youth cafés are an excellent opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs. Youth cafés can be an effective way of engaging young people in a safe and supportive environment, and they provide a valuable opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs. Youth cafés can be an effective way of engaging young people in a safe and supportive environment, and they provide a valuable opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs. Youth cafés can be an effective way of engaging young people in a safe and supportive environment, and they provide a valuable opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs. Youth cafés can be an effective way of engaging young people in a safe and supportive environment, and they provide a valuable opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs. Youth cafés can be an effective way of engaging young people in a safe and supportive environment, and they provide a valuable opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs. Youth cafés can be an effective way of engaging young people in a safe and supportive environment, and they provide a valuable opportunity to gather feedback from young people about the services and activities provided. They are particularly important for young people who may not have access to other forms of youth provision, such as sport or music clubs.
Midleton Community Enterprise in which young people participated. Most of the activities
51
People Now
No trouble
The project came together when the owners of a wine bar, which
Ideal location
has put in £5,000, and local businesses and community
council put in its annual grant of £10,000, North Somerset Council
unhealthy, but at the moment a lot of the kids are bringing chips
“We are planning to get catering in” she says. “Nothing too
hockey and a small arcade. Drinks and sandwiches are also on
plans for this year include music and karaoke nights.
people have to come in
recreation and leisure to young people’s development, refer to the
accessible and affordable (Hall, Coffey & Williamson, 1999, p.506).
Places to “Hang Around” with Friends
facilities, leisure activities, worries and concerns as well as sources
population of personal, social, physical (mainly in relation to sport and physical
community projects (hanging around outside). These authors provide a comprehensive
that are attributed to them in the research. Qualitative researchers
meanings that exist in the minds of those surveyed and those
ensured by statistical procedures are not applicable. Rather
data for the study (for the study
the meanings that exist in the minds of those surveyed and those
identifying the broad categories on which the results were based. This was done
and which has been identified in other research as an important
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by people with the opportunity to establish stronger links. These links provide a
in the research. They are selected because of their relevance to the analysis of activity and
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areas of particular interest, This coding was confirmed
researchers seek to develop a second level coding (at the level of activity or theme) of
of the respondents were identified as being interested in
interpretation is involved in the content analysis process. Not all
act on the meanings that exist in the minds of those surveyed and those
and which has been identified in other research as an important
themes which were subject to a second level coding in which non-alarmist
by people with the opportunity to establish stronger links. These links provide a
in the research. They are selected because of their relevance to the analysis of activity and