Promoting Quality in Intercultural Youth Work:

12 Steps to Good Practice
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Foreword

This resource was devised as a guide for youth workers and volunteers in promoting intercultural youth work across the youth sector in Ireland. It is a guide that any youth service, club or project can use to become a more inclusive service, reaching as many young people in the local community as possible, and ensuring those young people feel welcome to return as regular participants.

The resource is laid out as 12 Steps to Good Practice in Intercultural Youth Work. Each step covers a different aspect of youth work from the practicalities of creating an inclusive environment in your organisation (Step 2 – Space & Environment) to effectively monitoring the impact of your work (Step 11 – Monitoring and Evaluation). Each Step contains a description of what your youth organisation can do, methods and good practice examples from other youth work organisations around Ireland, additional resources and training to consult as necessary, and a list of indicators to measure how you are doing, and how you can go further. In order to be a guide for the whole youth sector in promoting intercultural youth work, the “12 Steps” guide uses the term ‘your organisation’ to refer to all projects, clubs and services within the youth work sector.

NYCI devised the “12 Steps” guide based on positive examples of intercultural youth work in Ireland, and good practice internationally. The 12 Steps are not laid out in any particular order of importance. None of the youth work organisations we feature went through each Step from 1 to 12 in full or in order. The 12 Steps are very much an ideal scenario of what your organisation can achieve. In reality, many services, projects and clubs will fulfil some of the 12 Steps, but not others. Some of the Steps you may already have attained, and some of the Steps might be reached easily in your organisation or with your group. In some cases, you may choose to adopt some of the practices in a particular Step, but not all of them. Other Steps may become long-term goals for your organisation and a means to map out the direction you wish to take over the coming years.
In creating this resource, we interviewed 8 individual services, projects and clubs, from different youth work organisations and in different parts of Ireland – ranging from inner city projects to rural areas and suburban outskirts. Each featured organisation reflects different practices in youth work, but all have led on an intercultural approach for several years. The organisations, their workers and volunteers have done this in different ways, but always by focusing on the needs of each young person, and finding ways to reach out and include young people from minority ethnic communities in the local area.

NYCI would like to thank all youth services, clubs and projects around Ireland who participated in the writing of this resource, for their time, their feedback and the use of their photographs.
Description of the 8 featured youth work organisations

Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), ‘Talking Heads’ project, Foróige
http://www.foroige.ie/index.cfm?fuseaction=Neighbourhood_Youth_Projects&content_id=22

Castlebar NYP works holistically with young people who are (or at risk of) experiencing personal, social or educational difficulties by providing a wide range of interventions at individual, group and family level. Since 2008 the NYP has been working with a new group of young people who are in need of their support, namely young immigrants living in the town and in several Direct Provision Centres locally. When extra funding was sourced, the youth worker had the opportunity to work regularly with a group of young people in Ballyhaunis, a nearby town. The group was a mix of young asylum seekers and others living locally. The group created puppets as a means of addressing issues of culture and identity, which was known as the ‘Talking Heads’ project.

Localise, Integration Programme and Multicultural School
www.localise.ie

Localise organisation has been working in Ireland for about 40 years through Localise projects or a programme of ‘Caring in the Community’. The aim of the programme is to address needs of the local community and do something pro-active which will benefit it. There has been a very big expansion in Localise’s work in recent years including the Integration Programme whereby young people and adult leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds organise projects in the local area. The Multicultural school provided a combined programme of educational sessions on the heritage culture of the young people, learning about Ireland and a ‘Caring in the Community’ project.
No. 4 Drop-in centre, GDYS (Galway Diocesan Youth Service)

No. 4 drop-in Centre was set up by the Galway Diocesan Youth Services (GDYS) in 1979 to cater for the daytime needs of homeless young people in Galway city. No. 4 has always worked with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of young people from minority ethnic and cultural communities presenting to the service has increased in recent years. No.4 aims to enhance the quality of young people’s lives by responding to a variety of issues particular to youth and youth homelessness.

Ógra Chorcaí, Bishopstown Youth Project Contactable through this forum
http://homepage.eircom.net/~clvyc/home.html

Bishopstown Youth Project has been working with a group of young people who are marginalised and at risk in the suburbs of Cork city since 1996. Over 70 young people access the centre each week for activities designed to meet the needs of specific groups of young people, such as wood turning, sports, drama, cookery, mental health programmes and a homework club. The Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) in Cork approached the youth worker to ask if some young Travellers could join the group, and the new members were accepted immediately and integrated into existing programmes.

Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, Foróige
http://www.foroige.ie/index.cfm?fuseaction=Local_Youth_Services&content_id=16

Tyrrelstown is a recently developed suburb on the outskirts of West Dublin. The area has a large population and a high rate of cultural and ethnic diversity. An inter-agency report stated the need for a youth service in the area, so the Youth Initiative was set up in late 2007. The service offered many types of activities such as a health programme, rap music, circus activities, a study group, sporting activities and other community-wide activities to groups of young people aged between 10-18 years.
Voluntary Service International (VSI) Dublin, Teenage Programme

http://www.vsi.ie/volunteer/teenage.html

Voluntary Service International (VSI) is the Irish branch of an international NGO called “Service Civil International”. In Ireland, the focus of VSI is on marginalised youth, encouraging them to access volunteering opportunities through the Teenage Programme. Some separated children seeking asylum in Ireland contacted VSI as they wanted to become volunteers. VSI also organises youth exchanges and residential camps for young people. In general the focus is on promoting volunteerism to young people, and encouraging them to take positive action for change within society.

Youth Work Ireland, Galway, SPARK (Support Project for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Kids)  http://www.youthworkgalway.ie/projects.php?project=24

SPARK is a collaborative project between Youth Work Ireland, Galway and HSE West, and was set up in 2003 to specifically address the needs of separated children seeking asylum in Galway. Initially, the project aimed to support young asylum seekers going through the asylum process, by providing the particular help that process requires. The programme has since evolved. The original target group continue to participate, and many activities now take place in an integrated youth group with other members of the wider organisation. The project also provides information, support and advocacy.

YMCA Cork, Ninos Club  http://www.ymcacork.org/index.htm

In Cork city, YMCA was working on an outreach basis to provide a health project to asylum seekers living in a Direct Provision Centre. This process alerted them to the needs of young immigrants in the area, particularly in educational support. In early 2007, ‘Ninos Club’ began on a weekly basis and now offers homework support, English language support and recreational activities to young immigrants. It is run by YMCA youth workers together with a network of volunteers.
Step 1 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

An organisational review means your youth organisation should undertake a planning process when adopting an intercultural approach to youth work. This involves collecting information on the demographics of the local area, such as the cultural and ethnic groups living in your local community. Your membership form should include details on the ethnic background of the young people attending to facilitate planning. Your youth organisation, staff and volunteers should aim to reflect the cultural diversity of the community. Research could also include information on languages spoken, culture, religious background, minority ethnic groups, churches, schools and so on. It is useful to map other services in the area, and identify any gaps to avoid duplication. The organisational review should also include an honest evaluation of both the capacity of the organisation to meet the different needs of young people in the area, as well as the willingness of staff to adopt the new approach.

Organisational Review in detail...

The primary concern for youth work is the education of young people in non-formal settings and meeting the self-esteem, physical, social, spiritual, emotional, mental and sexual health needs of young people. When targeting a young person from a minority ethnic background, it is important to look at their needs as a ‘young person’ first, and as a young person from a minority ethnic background second. It is important to keep in mind the ethos of the organisation, and remain consistent in the type of service you run and what you offer to young people attending.

When deciding to actively target young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, your organisation should review your mission statement and guiding principles, as well as any other policies and procedures which would affect intercultural youth work in your organisations. For instance, Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí) was already working with young people, many of whom were at risk or marginalised. Working with young Travellers who were also at risk in similar circumstances was a natural progression.
“My own attitude, like everyone else out here, was these are young people, they have the same needs - yes a different culture but they have the same needs - as any other young person in the area. I would have been familiar with Travellers but I wouldn’t have said I had any cultural awareness, training or anything. You’re always going to be fearful, is there going to be issues – of staff accepting the Travellers, of young people mixing together…. These were fleeting thoughts but these are thoughts you have with any new young person who joins the youth group”. (Bishopstown youth worker)

Many youth organisations have a defined target group and specific programmes designed to target young people at risk. However young people can be “at risk” in different ways and therefore you have to be clear on who they are targeting, why, and how they respond to the needs of those young people. In Ireland, the life situation or characteristics that render a young person at risk include involvement in criminal behaviour; being “in care”; poverty and/or poor quality housing; family difficulties or abuse; academic difficulties and/or a bad experience of school; and homelessness, among others. Young people from a minority ethnic background may be at risk of the above, and in need of similar supports to other young people you work with. However, young people from a minority ethnic background may be at risk from other factors related to the reasons why they and/or their family originally came to Ireland, such as uncertainty about their future; isolation; confusion over their identity; suffering from stress/trauma; vulnerable to exploitation; and so on. It is also important that you meet the needs of the individual, and not just a ‘group’. Can your organisation meet the needs of young people at risk in those circumstances? Due to the increased ethnic diversity in Castlebar, the Foróige Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP) identified young asylum seekers and refugees as a new group of young people
at risk and they developed intercultural groups that focused on increasing the social networks of newcomers to Castlebar as well as discussing and facilitating sessions on culture and identity.

“Our target group was separated children but we had a huge number of foreign exchange students coming and we had to take a step back and ask ourselves – should we be working with this group? We discussed it and decided that they also had a need as they were starved of things to do and they were a very positive influence on the group but also we wanted Ninos to be a place that wasn’t labelled as being just for one group”. (YMCA youth worker)

Many young people from a minority ethnic background are not ‘at risk’ but youth organisations can be a fantastic opportunity for settling into a new community, offering recreational activities, such as issue-based programmes (for example justice, social awareness, development education); personal welfare and wellbeing; support in education and improving English; intercultural and international activities and exchanges such as the youth exchanges organised by VSI (Voluntary Service International) Teenage Programme. If your organisation does not offer what the young person is looking for, you should refer them on to another relevant youth organisation. (See Step 7 Activities; Step 8 Networking)

“We over time we realised that we offer a particular service and some of the young people getting involved were getting involved because it involved something, an activity, but they weren’t necessarily that motivated about the activity itself”....

“We’re still a very particular type of organisation. We’re not about art or GAA so we don’t want to stretch ourselves too far outside our own ethos and aims and goals and activities”...”We realised probably the ideal way to go is to actually start putting other organisations in contact through partnership projects. It’s proven quite successful with ECO-UNESCO our partner organisation in the Easter project”. “We realised that just because they’re from the ‘target group’ and they’re marginalised doesn’t mean they have to join our activity.” (VSI Teenage Programme Coordinator)
It is important to **adhere to the mission of the youth organisation, and remain consistent in the type of service you run and what you offer to young people attending.** VSI has found it important to reconcile the interests of the young people – such as sport - and the organisational ethos of VSI which focuses on volunteering and non-formal education on peace, environment, community and conflict resolution. VSI discovered that while the first separated children they worked with were interested in carrying out voluntary work, as more and more joined through ‘word of mouth’, there were different expectations of what activities could be done. VSI is now investigating options for how young people could move on to other relevant youth clubs and organisations, if they wish, and is looking at the possibility of doing this through a peer education system (which would empower the young people as well). In the case of YMCA Cork, the staff conceived a specific project for immigrant youth but it fit in with the YMCA ethos and practice – especially in light of their educational programmes.

**Your organisation may have an ‘open door’ policy, but does that mean that young people from a minority ethnic background know about or access your organisation?** An ‘open door’ policy is often simply not enough. Many young people and their parents will not be familiar with the concept of youth work. They may not know about local youth organisations or where they can be accessed and by whom. In addition, they may not know if they are ‘safe’ places for their children to attend. **Outreach is crucial for reaching young people from minority ethnic families.** For the Localise project, the staff didn’t wait for migrant communities to join Localise, but went to meet them directly. YMCA in Cork had already been working on an outreach basis in a Direct Provision Centre in Cork to deliver health programmes. Having seen the lack of services for young people in the Direct Provision Centre, YMCA focused on working with this group. Eventually, YMCA understood the needs of immigrants in Cork and the gap in services for the under-18s. From the outreach work, YMCA had also learnt that many immigrants wanted skills-based courses such as computer and language classes rather than a purely recreational group.
“For the first 3-4 months I made a point of being active where young people were taking part in things in neighbouring areas; music, rap, footballs, computers. So basically showing my face around, speaking with them, asking them what their interests were. I built up a registry. And we also did focus groups locally with the young people in Tyrrelstown to see what their needs were”. (Tyrrelstown youth worker)

Generally, youth organisations respond to the needs of the local community. In the experience of Localise, **the local communities where they work are now very diverse in Ireland, so it’s important to meet the needs of all.** Some youth groups are set up specifically due to the demographic make-up of the local area, including Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, which was set up in an area which is very culturally diverse. It is important to collect data on the minority ethnic communities represented in your catchment area, as well as languages spoken. The youth worker in Tyrrelstown spent the initial few months creating a registry of young people in the area. When developing good practice in your organisation, NYCI would also recommend that an **ethnic identifier is included on all registration forms**, including information such as nationality, ethnicity, place of birth, family background, native language(s). For instance, it is good practice to ask the nationality or ethnic group of the young person, and that of their parent(s)/guardian(s)/primary caregiver(s), in order to plan adequately. Young people over the age of 11 should answer for themselves. For those younger than 11, parent(s), guardian(s) or primary caregiver(s) should be consulted on the nationality/ethnic background of the young person. This can be done on the registration form or in an interview for members. It can also be a good way to begin the needs assessment of the young person.

It is important to liaise with other agencies working in your local area, or with your target group. Make sure to **fill gaps in services identified and not duplicate** the work of others.

**The aim of many of the youth work activities is integration, but it is often not stated as such.** The Localise Programme focuses on integration through their
programme of ‘Caring in the Community’ whereby they address needs of the local community and do something which will benefit the local community. Their approach is a fundamental education process called ‘Community Service Learning’. The basis is that people of all communities look to the local community and do projects for that local - predominantly Irish - community. This has been very useful for integration in terms of doing something positive. Similarly, the youth worker in Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative never told the young people that the aim of that project was ‘integration’.

You may also need to review organisational policies in your workplace. **Do you have an Equality or Intercultural Policy?** Are there regulations on racist language or bullying? It is important to discuss issues which may arise, among staff, for instance when can young people speak their native language? Will you provide gender-specific activities? How do you identify and tackle racism? (See Step 6 Group Contract; Step 9 Policy Development)
Additional Resources/Training on Organisational Review:

- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  [http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit](http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit)
- Department of Education and Science can provide information on the nationality of students attending local schools

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Has your organisation consulted statistics on the population of local area? YES NO
- Has your organisation gathered data on the ethnicity of young people using your service? YES NO
- Does the registration form of your youth organisation include an 'ethnic identifier'? YES NO
- Does your organisation participate in local inter-agency fora and/or networks in planning? YES NO
- Has your organisation completed a self-assessment process to identify gaps in your service (e.g. NYCI ‘Access all Areas’ Diversity Toolkit checklists)? YES NO
- Does your organisation refer young people to other relevant youth organisations as needed? YES NO
Step 2 SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT

The space and environment where your youth group meet can be hugely important in attracting young people from a minority ethnic background. There are very easy and effective ways to make your organisation safe, approachable and welcoming for young people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds. This should include having regular times and dates for drop-in and other activities. Include maps in your promotional material. Incorporate visual imagery that is culturally inclusive and use different languages in your entrance areas and promotional material. Provide a drop-in facility for parents and young people to meet you face-to-face as they may be more confident communicating in English that way than when speaking over the phone. If parents arrive with, or collect, young people take the time to talk with them. Use simple English at all times and provide written notes and reminders as well as verbal ones. Where possible, provide food and music for any events organised. Consider gender when groups are meeting in your organisation and especially if you have gender specific groups.

Good Practice in using your Space and Environment...

Most youth organisations are not in control of their environment as much as they would like to be, but all of the youth workers interviewed for this resource found ways to positively affect the spaces they use. The SPARK project (YWI Galway) is lucky to use the GAF Youth Health and Advice Café in Galway which has frontal access to a main road, an inviting café-style interior, welcoming staff, inclusive imagery and a comfort zone with large, bright seats and coloured walls. One of the other advantages of using this space is that at non-programme times members of the SPARK group can access the Youth Café and use its facilities and they will always find support from other youth workers if they need it. Changes to the Café space have happened naturally based on the needs of the young people. In one instance the ‘You Are Not Alone’ Guide – containing information on local services for young people - was made available in other languages once the need was identified and a grant was sourced.
Like the GAF Youth Café, No.4 drop-in centre (Galway Diocesan Youth Services) has an on-street location in a renovated house in central Galway. It has a sitting room/computer area, kitchen and dining area, shower facilities and laundry facilities. Open Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 5pm, it offers an extensive range of services aimed at meeting the individual needs of its service users, from literacy and numeracy classes, to arts and crafts, computer use, resource library, medical assistance, education, and employment training, nutrition and health programmes, outreach, advocacy and referral services as well as accommodation and laundry facilities. Its welcome includes having flags - of many nationalities that access the service - painted on the kitchen walls. Projects done by the young people on different countries are also displayed. Other activities such as Nintendo Wii games are used to bring people together.

“Because we only ever meet the people who do join our youth groups we are unaware how many people could not find our organisation, or on arrival felt it wasn’t for them but only for ‘Irish’ young people because of the signs and images they saw or a lack of welcome from staff.” (NYCI Intercultural Officer)

Others have very different homes. Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, Foróige, was given a large open-plan area in an apartment complex in the centre of Tyrrelstown – a new development on the outskirts of West Dublin – but its entrance was up a private residential stairway that could only be accessed by a code-locked gate. The code could not be shared as it led to a residential space. With no freedom to manipulate her first contact point, the youth worker shifted her space and environment to the streets by spending time with the young people out in the community doing outreach work. In time, the anonymity of the youth centre space actually became an asset with the young people saying they felt they had more ownership over it as being ‘their’ own private space. Nevertheless, the youth worker’s open and welcoming attitude was always clear to the groups and they never treated it as an exclusive space, always encouraging others in their community to join too. The lack of having a public front door was compensated by the youth worker giving her mobile number to all the young people who attended.
"Before we reached the centre in Bishopstown, the youth worker took me on a detour, “You need to get an idea of the geography of the area and what it takes for the young Travellers to access our services”. Several turns later and down a long country road, the youth worker pointed up a long driveway, “That’s the entrance to the halting site”. Just five minutes by car but half hours walk from the local schools and the youth centre. It wasn’t a road you would have your child walking down on their own on a dark winter evening. “This may be the biggest obstacle to the Travellers’ ongoing involvement in our youth service.”

(Bishopstown youth worker)

In contrast, Bishopstown Youth Project, Ógra Chorcaí, takes place in a large building set on barren ground some way removed from the local suburban houses. Its stark two-storey façade, iron-clad door and numerous security locks do not suggest what lies inside. This is a space that, despite its exterior, is young person centred and has been adapted to meet the needs of the community. On entry, the space opens up into a series of rooms. Bikes that were being worked on as part of an ongoing project occupy one large room that also doubles as a homework club space. Coloured hand prints on the walls together with names are testimony to all the young people who use this space and make it their own. A large comfortable activity zone is on the second storey along with a kitchen that doubles as a parents’ space. Another work space, complete with lathe for woodwork, and offices make up the rest of the environment. The walls are adorned with the young people’s work testifying to how much the young people – and their culture - are valued and welcomed.

This was evidenced by the fact that the young Travellers had produced work that very much reflected their culture. The Bishopstown Youth Worker told me that the young people always make one item to take home and are then asked to make something they were happy to leave at the youth centre thus creating that sense of ownership that made the place so welcoming and inclusive. In fact, the environment spoke more about the youth worker’s philosophy around the integration of the Traveller young people. For him it was never about integrating
the young people together – it was about inclusion. It was about meeting each young person’s needs and if some of those needs happened to be culturally different to others then they would respond to those as they would to any particular need that arose for any of the other young people they work with.

Some projects occupy temporary premises for the duration of projects. For the ‘Talking Heads’ project (Foróige Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project) a primary school prefab was used. While it was not ideal, its location was very central and allowed the participants to get there and back in time with their other schedules, especially those imposed by the Direct Provision Centre where they lived. Together with the young people it was decided that each session should start with a sandwich break and it was agreed that the young people would make the sandwiches themselves which in turn broke down barriers between the young people and created the right atmosphere. It also encouraged the young people to arrive early. After tidying up at the end of the session, chocolate was given out as reward.

Ninos club, YMCA Cork, occupies an older building, taking place on the second and third floors of the YMCA building. It houses a Youth Information Centre on the ground floor that leads off a hallway where numerous posters are displayed. A stairway leads off this fascinating foyer. What lies up the stairs is a mystery and it could possibly be daunting for a lone first-timer but after one visit – even after a few minutes – young people would feel very much at home and at ease. In the early days there was always someone downstairs on Ninos club nights to greet newcomers or signs to guide them upstairs. Its phenomenal success means that active recruitment has ceased and now youth workers welcome the members who start to
arrive around 4pm every Tuesday evening upstairs in the large café-style room where Ninos members gather. One thing that has always remained steadfast is that the young people are welcomed with a warm snack such as pizza, garlic bread or wedges, as well as fruit and juice. The young people hang around socially, some play games such as table football, or chat.

At 6pm the young people attending Ninos Club will generally go into the chill room – a dark, cosy, red space with beanbags and big screen for DVDs, and enough room for all to take part in whatever group discussion or activity that is planned for the evening. Later the building seems to expand to fit numerous small groups working on their own homework activities with volunteers. Everywhere is utilised – computer room, club space, study space and games room.

“In Irish groups we go to the area they live in. When we work with foreign nationals, we go to the place they meet. We use this meeting place as their ‘local community’”. (Localise Development Officer)

Both VSI (Voluntary Service International) and Localise change locations with each project. VSI are usually in residential settings. The young people make these settings their own by choosing the music and entertainment, by cooking their own food, and often having culture evenings. Sometimes imagery and posters are used – especially in youth exchange projects. Localise go to where the minority ethnic communities and groups meet.
Additional Resources/Training on developing your Space and Environment:

- Practical Guidelines for doing Intercultural Youth Work
  - www.intercultural.ie or http://www.intercultural.ie/practice_guidelines
- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  - http://www.youth.ie/diversity
- NYCI flyer on Intercultural Youth Work (with sections translated into 8 languages)
  - http://www.intercultural.ie/youth_work

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Is your space welcoming to young people from different ethnic backgrounds?  
  - YES  NO
- Are staff members and volunteers especially welcoming?  
  - YES  NO
- Do you have signs in different languages?  
  - YES  NO
- Do you have visual imagery that portrays cultural diversity (posters, flags, photographs)?  
  - YES  NO
- Is your information clear and fully explanatory to newcomers (dates, location, contact details, who can attend, costs etc)?  
  - YES  NO
- Do you have a drop-in facility for young people and their parents to access information?  
  - YES  NO
Step 3 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS – ATTITUDE AND COMMITMENT

Staff attitude should always be open and friendly. The roles of both paid staff and volunteers are crucial in adopting an intercultural approach to youth work. Staff must have access to training and support services. 'Buy-in' and willingness from all is fundamental, as well as leadership from management in promoting intercultural youth work. It is important that paid staff and volunteers are also representative of minority ethnic backgrounds. When working with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds, it may be necessary that a trusted, known adult from a minority ethnic community is present, at least initially. It is also important that staff members are clear on appropriate terminology when talking about young people from a minority ethnic background, but that there are no 'taboos'. Young people may perceive the relationship with staff as personal rather than professional. Youth work staff should establish clear boundaries in youth work, in terms of relationships with the young people, language used, explaining clearly what youth work is and what your organisation provides.

Good Practice with staff and volunteers…

Many youth workers and volunteers already have the skills required to work with young people from a minority ethnic background. Good intercultural practice involves good youth work practice. Many youth workers and volunteers will have experience of working with young people from different backgrounds and cultures, with specific identities and individual needs. These skills should be encouraged and promoted to work with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in your community. For instance, the Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Foróige, had experience of working with young Travellers, and the youth worker saw that many similar issues arose when working with young people and their parents from other minority cultural groups in Ireland.
Buy-in from the staff and volunteers in your organisation is very important, and all must be encouraged and willing to work with young people from a variety of national and cultural backgrounds. Reluctance of staff could be due to a lack of training or confidence in working with those who they perceive to be ‘different’. Be sure to talk through issues regularly at staff meetings; record details of what works and what doesn’t; make sure everyone has the opportunity to voice concerns and learn from colleagues.

“When people get training...such as intercultural training...it empowers them a lot. It makes them feel more equipped to handle situations. People are very afraid of doing the wrong thing.. Using the wrong words.. Being ‘politically incorrect’.... If you don’t understand somebody, just ask. Just be honest in saying ‘I don’t know a lot about where you’re from. Would you like to tell me something about it?’” (SPARK youth worker)

Just as staff willingness is important, leadership from the organisation and management is crucial when adopting an intercultural approach to youth work. All projects interviewed highlighted the importance of internal leadership. Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative (Foróige) spoke of the efforts made by Blanchardstown Youth Service in promoting intercultural youth work, and the development of an Intercultural Strategy by Foróige which backed up their work on the ground.

Many staff and volunteers can participate in and have already received specific training, in addition to the skills learned through their youth work experience and through working in communities overseas and locally. Specific training on intercultural issues is also available on issues of tackling racism, cultural competency and intercultural awareness. Details of NYCI training courses are available on [www.intercultural.ie/training](http://www.intercultural.ie/training). For information on other intercultural courses please contact us directly. You can also ask other organisations working
locally in your area. YMCA Cork received training from minority ethnic associations in Cork city which was a great opportunity to ‘ask the experts’.

Staff may also fear ‘saying the wrong thing’ or offending people unintentionally. It is important to address the issue of terminology in staff meetings and with the young people themselves, for example, in the group contract. However, don’t worry that you always have to be ‘politically correct’. Language changes constantly and it is better to ask someone directly rather than never at all. When in doubt, ask someone in a sensitive and polite manner.

**Involving adult leaders and parents from minority ethnic communities in your organisation is extremely useful.** There are different approaches to doing this. Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí) had a strong relationship with other agencies working with young Travellers such as the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) in Cork; Castlebar NYP Foróige, asked parents of minority ethnic young people to supervise on excursions during the year; the SPARK project in Youth Work Ireland, Galway had some adult asylum seekers as volunteers; and the VSI (Voluntary Service International) Teenage Programme have a number of volunteers through the European Voluntary Service who represented different cultures and languages. According to VSI it is crucial for minority ethnic young people in Ireland to have role-models from different backgrounds in their lives. It gives the young people hope and inspiration for their own future in Ireland. Young men in particular benefitted greatly from having a ‘non-Irish male leader’ in their group.

“I think it’s very important to the young people to have role models that are from other countries.. Otherwise it’s a case of ‘we know and you don’t’ or ‘we’re in charge’… it becomes a hierarchy”.. “Using peer leaders is a good way. When someone reaches 19 or 20 they could be peer leaders... It’s important to show that people can come here as asylum seekers and be successful and have fulfilling lives and move forward.” (SPARK Youth Worker)

If you do recruit volunteers from a minority ethnic background it is very important to support them in understanding their role and the role of your organisation. Many
people do not understand the meaning of ‘youth work’. **Explain all youth work processes clearly.** Refer to NYCI’s flyer on intercultural youth work which explains what youth work and interculturalism mean in 8 different languages (available on [www.intercultural.ie](http://www.intercultural.ie)). All volunteers should receive training covering the work of the organisation, intercultural issues and Child Protection. Garda Vetting is also a process which must be explained in detail to all volunteers. The Localise project recruited volunteers from many backgrounds and were assisted in Garda Vetting by a larger youth work organisation. Furthermore, many groups find that while a volunteer is awaiting Garda Clearance they can still be involved; either working alongside another vetted staff member, or in tasks other than working directly with young people.

“We had people dropping in asking about volunteering and we could spend ages talking to them. We found all our time was being eaten up by this and we weren’t getting our work done. So we became quite rigid in our approach and told interested people when the next volunteer information night would be and we would contact them beforehand. We have also given volunteers more roles and responsibilities.” (YMCA youth worker)

**Volunteers must be supported throughout their work with your organisation.** Do not take on volunteers if you do not have sufficient time or resources to support them in their role. Regular meetings with the volunteers are important – the SPARK project organised meetings for the volunteer team every 5-6 weeks to address any issues and hear feedback of their experience. The Ninos Club, YMCA Cork, found that, rather than taking on new volunteers on an ad-hoc basis, it worked best to organise induction meetings for volunteers, to maximise the time they had for recruitment. Volunteers were also recruited through University College Cork (UCC), again at scheduled meetings. Volunteers are important but should be recruited based on the needs of your group. No. 4 drop-in centre (Galway Diocesan Youth Service (GDYS)) looked for volunteers with specific skills they could pass on to the young people. Castlebar NYP, Foróige, recruited two artists as volunteers for the
‘Talking Heads’ puppetry project. The Localise project and SPARK also involved volunteers based on the needs of the project.

“Volunteers are recruited on a needs basis. We generally advertise for volunteers for specific tasks or activities, for example, guitar lessons”.

(GDYS Youth Worker)
Additional Resources/Training for Staff and Volunteers:

- NYCI resource “Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Other Migrants – key definitions”
- NYCI resource “What terminology do I use when talking about Young People from a Minority Ethnic Background?” both available on [www.intercultural.ie](http://www.intercultural.ie)
- All NYCI intercultural training courses available through [www.intercultural.ie/training](http://www.intercultural.ie/training) and [www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)
- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector [http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit](http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit)
- NYCI flyer on Intercultural Youth Work (with sections translated into 8 languages) [http://www.intercultural.ie/youth_work](http://www.intercultural.ie/youth_work)
- Volunteer Centres Ireland [http://www.volunteer.ie/-about-us-.htm](http://www.volunteer.ie/-about-us-.htm)

How would you rate?/How is your organisation doing?

- Have your staff members received training on intercultural issues? YES NO
- Have your volunteers received training on intercultural issues? YES NO
- Does your organisation provide training for volunteers? YES NO
- Does your volunteer training cover topics such as understanding youth work, your organisation and the role of the volunteer? YES NO
- Does your volunteer training cover Child Protection and Garda vetting? YES NO
• Does your youth group have (or plan to recruit) volunteers from minority ethnic backgrounds?  
  YES  NO

• Does your management committee/board include members from diverse communities?  
  YES  NO

• Are minority ethnic communities and parents involved in your youth organisation?  
  YES  NO

• Do job descriptions require staff to have an awareness of interculturalism and diversity?  
  YES  NO
Step 4 RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERCULTURALISM ASSIGNED IN YOUR ORGANISATION

A staff member or team in your organisation should have responsibility for promoting interculturalism in your youth work. This would include planning, making sure you have a code of practice, establishing new contacts, identifying training opportunities, resources and so on. This competency can be part of a staff member’s main tasks and not necessarily a paid separate role, in the same way that responsibility for Health and Safety, First Aid or Child Protection is assigned. The role may also be combined with the role of Equality Officer or person responsible for other diversity issues in your organisation. The person with responsibility for interculturalism should undergo specific training on intercultural youth work.

Good Practice…

Interculturalism is often a grass-roots initiative in many organisations that comes about as a result of working with minority ethnic young people directly. However leadership from management is very important. In the case of Foróige’s Tyrellstown Youth Initiative, while the project worker had responsibility for interculturalism in her youth group, both her line manager in Blanchardstown Youth Service and a colleague in Headquarters strongly support interculturalism throughout Foróige.

“Having an intercultural policy or strategy makes it easier for a staff member to take on the responsibility for interculturalism in your work, because interculturalism has already become part of the stated aims of the organisation”. (NYCI Intercultural Officer)
For many youth organisations, **interculturalism is one aspect of diversity in youth work.** Many youth projects, clubs and services will also have programmes which support LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) young people; young women or men specifically; or young people with specific religious beliefs. For Youth Work Ireland Galway, the SPARK project is simply one of the many projects dealing with diversity in youth work throughout the organisation.

It is not necessary to have an Intercultural Project Officer. Many organisations choose to **combine the responsibilities for interculturalism with other roles** such as Equality Officer or Outreach Worker. In the case of Localise, all staff has responsibility for an intercultural approach but the Development Officer is the main point of outreach and so meets minority ethnic communities more often than other staff.

Management should try to support any staff member(s) who wish to take on the role of **person/team with responsibility for interculturalism** in your organisation. It is often very effective to allow two staff members to work together on this. Staff and volunteers in this role should be supported to participate in additional training on intercultural youth work.

“While one person coordinates issues connected with equality in Youth Work Ireland Galway, all staff are expected to promote and embed diversity in their youth work. The SPARK project simply leads in working with young refugees”.

(SPARK Youth Worker)

If your organisation develops a **policy or strategy**, it is important to **include a section on intercultural youth work and plan for this approach in the future.**

Galway Diocesan Youth Services (GDYS) have a youth strategy which is regularly reviewed and updated. It is planned that they will incorporate a section on interculturalism into the strategy in the near future.
Additional Resources/Training:

- NYCI intercultural training, in particular:
  - “Developing Intercultural Policies and Implementation Plans”
  - “How to design and deliver a session on Intercultural Awareness”

- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  
  [link](http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit)

How would you rate?/How is your organisation doing?

- Is responsibility for interculturalism assigned to a member of staff/team in your organisation?  
  
  YES       NO

- Does the person/team with responsibility for interculturalism have a task description?  
  
  YES       NO

- Is relevant training available to the person/team with responsibility for interculturalism?  
  
  YES       NO

- Has relevant training been completed by the person/team with responsibility for interculturalism?  
  
  YES       NO
**Step 5 INVOLVEMENT OF YOUTH**

An intercultural approach to youth work requires the involvement and participation of young people from the cultural and ethnic groups living in the local community as much as possible. Outreach to new communities is essential, and a traditional ‘open-door’ policy may not work. Consultation with young people in the area ensures that the youth organisation is needs-based, and in the youth services, projects and clubs featured in this resource, an individual needs-assessment was often completed when new participants joined.

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds attending your organisation may initially prefer to engage with people of the same background or living in similar circumstances. This is understandable, but the aim of all youth work should be integration. You and your colleagues must decide how to approach this; how to set up activities and when to mix groups. Talk to the young people when planning this. Consider setting up a 'buddy' system, in groups of 4 rather than pairs, for young people of different backgrounds to work together.

If your current group is quite ‘mono-cultural’, it can be beneficial to prepare them before introducing new members, and involve them in planning for this change. You should explore the needs, interests and own cultural awareness of your group. This will mitigate the potential for tension when faced with diversity. Young people may have dual or various 'identities', especially those of minority ethnic backgrounds; explore this in the group. It is important that every individual is encouraged to be aware of and proud of their own heritage and background.

**Good Practice in involving young people...**

*Young people will be drawn to a youth organisation that offers activities which they are interested in.* When working with young people from a minority ethnic background, the activities you offer can be especially important. Consult with the young people to see what they would like to do. Many minority ethnic parents will want to see their children doing activities which develop their life-skills and
education, and young people themselves are often motivated by activities that
develop their talents and abilities. (See Step 7 ‘Activities’)

**Identity work is important for all young people.** Even if you don’t work with a
group containing minority ethnic members, identity work should still take place,
especially if you are planning on introducing newcomers to a group. Young Irish
people may feel that they don’t have a ‘culture’. But feeling secure in your own
cultural background is crucial for integration within society in general.

“I did find that the older Irish guys – well they actually said this – that they were put
off by more and more Africans joining and they did begin to fade away from the
club. And then when I met them on the street they said that actually the youth club
wasn’t for them anymore, they wanted pool and they didn’t like doing the activities
where I “forced” them to interact together. But they had got what they wanted
from it and in all fairness I see them hanging out with the African guys from the
club. So there is integration. I like to think it was because I “forced” them, as they
say. Actually the best present I can get is when I see them all – all the nationalities
hanging out together”. (Tyrrelstown youth worker)

Youth workers are often unsure of whether an integrated or targeted approach is
best when working with young people from a minority ethnic background. In the
experience of the youth workers interviewed for this resource, it is important to
work based on the needs and wants of the young people themselves. The SPARK
project (Youth Work Ireland Galway) began with targeted youth work but provided
more and more integrated group sessions with the SPARK members and other
young people who attended the Gaf Youth Café, Galway. However, SPARK
continuously provides a targeted service to the SPARK group through ‘Comfort
Zone’; a specific support group for teenage refugees and asylum seekers to discuss
issues related to their status, in a safe environment. In Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative
(Foróige), the group had a minority of young Irish people involved at first, but the
youth worker undertook active initiatives to try to get more young Irish people on
board as well. Apart from one specific project, there was no need to separate the
young people coming to the club, and approximately half of the young people coming to Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative were Irish, many of whom were young Travellers. In Localise, some young people join a mixed group but some prefer to have their own programmes after school with others from their own culture and language group. Group work and individual support are often both necessary and complementary. YMCA Cork describe their ‘psychosocial space’ whereby team workers ‘float’ during the ‘Ninos’ homework club in order to be available to young people. Young people are invited in turn for private one-to-one chats – a few are seen each week to check on how they are doing.

“It’s not that the group wasn’t integrated before, but I think the emphasis was on individual work until 2-3 years ago. I don’t think there were any groups that were not ‘mixed’, it was just that the individual work took priority. Once the young people were ready for group work, it was just logical for it to be integrated. I don’t think there was any point for groups happening with people from other countries and everybody else was out.” (SPARK Youth Worker)

Some youth groups work specifically with immigrant youth. YMCA Cork runs a distinct project specifically for immigrant youth called ‘Ninos’. Young people in need of the service were targeted through local schools. A special aim of the project was to target separated children who live in two local hostels. However the project is by no means ‘mono-cultural’. There is huge diversity in ethnic background so integration is happening cross culturally in the group.

**Working with young males and females together can be a barrier for some ethnic and cultural groups.** Your youth organisation will need to decide whether or not to provide single-gender activities. Segregation based on gender may be necessary, for instance in activities such as swimming. In the case of Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí), all of their
activities work well in separate groups, and there is no call for them to be mixed. This made it a lot easier to introduce young Travellers into their project as there were no gender barriers to be overcome. Segregation based on gender may also be determined based on the type of activity on offer. A health course run by Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative brought a group of girls from Eastern Europe and Ireland together.

When working with young people from a minority ethnic background, trying to find the right ‘terminology’ or what many regard as ‘politically correct’ can seem very difficult. **When in doubt, it is best to ask the young people themselves.** For instance, the SPARK group asked youth workers not to refer to them as ‘asylum seekers’, due to negative coverage they had seen and heard in the Irish media. The coordinator of VSI’s (Voluntary Service International) youth programme also stated that it is crucial to **make an effort to get the young person’s name right from the start**, and always ask them what they prefer to be called – first/second name, nicknames and so on.

**Flexibility is generally very important** when working with young people, and this is also true of young people from a minority ethnic background. When working with young Travellers, Bishopstown Youth Project found the best approach was to **keep a young person’s place open to them**, even if they had not attended for some time. Follow-up with any young person to see why they have stopped attending and make sure that they know they are welcome back at any time. Bishopstown Youth Project has also chosen to keep some places in reserve for marginalised young people, and young Travellers in particular. The Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Foróige, and VSI also felt it necessary to **keep places open for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**. Many of VSI’s projects took place abroad, and since asylum seekers cannot travel, specific places in the projects taking place in Ireland were reserved for them. YMCA in Cork also adopts a flexible approach - if someone doesn’t show up for several weeks they are contacted. Nevertheless, participation has peaks and troughs depending on the school year; the club just runs with who is there and now knows the rhythms to expect.
You need to ask yourself if your organisation is the most appropriate for the minority ethnic young person you meet. Many youth organisations in Ireland work with young people at risk and those experiencing personal, social or educational difficulties. Some minority ethnic young people are at risk in the same way that other young people you work with are. Others will be at risk based on their legal status in Ireland. Projects like No. 4 drop-in centre, Galway Diocesan Youth Services (GDYS) found that minority ethnic young people who used the drop-in centre required the particular assistance that their service was providing; a drop-in centre catering for the daytime needs of homeless and other disadvantaged young people in Galway city. For VSI it is important to refer a young person onto another organisation, if one specific youth organisation does not meet the need of the young person who wants to become involved in youth work.

Waiting lists are a feature of many Irish youth clubs, projects and services. Very often popular activities have waiting lists of several months or years. As a result they can indirectly discriminate against a young person who has not lived in the area for long, and therefore has no chance to participate. Referring someone to a waiting list can be interpreted as a polite rejection, especially if someone comes from a country which doesn’t operate a system of waiting lists. Why not consider a lottery by putting all names from the waiting list in together and pulling names from a hat as places arise?

Above all, all youth workers interviewed agreed that involving young people from minority ethnic communities was worth the effort and positively transformed the work they were doing.

“It’s really just transformed the youth programme. In some ways we went into it in a naïve way. We just saw them as young people who wanted to get involved. We opened the doors to them”…”For us it just seemed like a really organic thing for the organisation.” (VSI Teenage Programme Coordinator)
Additional Resources/Training on how to involve young people:

- NYCI resource “Why don’t we?”
  [http://www.youth.ie/resources/why_don_t_we_youth_participation_resource_pack](http://www.youth.ie/resources/why_don_t_we_youth_participation_resource_pack)
- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  [http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit](http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit)

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Are minority ethnic young people represented in your youth organisation?  
  [YES  NO]
- Does your organisation portray a range of young people in advertising?  
  [YES  NO]
- Does your youth organisation reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity locally?  
  [YES  NO]
- Are minority ethnic communities, parents and young people consulted and involved in planning activities?  
  [YES  NO]
- Have you assessed whether targeted or mixed groups are more appropriate?  
  [YES  NO]
- Have you assessed whether single gender activities are required?  
  [YES  NO]
- Do you check-in regularly with young people using your organisation?  
  [YES  NO]
- Do you refer young people to other relevant youth organisations as needed?  
  [YES  NO]
- Does your organisation have peer/youth leaders who come from a minority ethnic background?  
  [YES  NO]
**Step 6 GROUP CONTRACT**

A group contract is a fundamental set of rules for running any youth group, and it is particularly important for intercultural youth groups. The group contract should highlight the need for respect within the group, and the behaviour expected of each participant. It should also outline types of behaviour, language and so on that are acceptable and what is not, and what should be done in addressing specific incidents of racism and discrimination. Like any complaints procedure within your organisation, this should include various steps including warnings, suspension, membership revoked, redress for victim and so on. An anti-racism agenda should also be actively undertaken, for instance in terms of addressing commonly-held myths. Your group contract may need to include rules on the use of different languages in your organisation, as well as the use of specific terminology or names.

**Good Practice in developing an Intercultural Group Contract...**

When it comes to writing a group contract, there are many different practices among the projects featured in this resource. All groups had different styles of agreements. However, one thing was consistent – all groups had a code of behaviour on what was acceptable, or not, for members of the group covering issues of respect, language, bullying and communication.

All organisations used a combination of rules for the specific group of young people, while also relying on the ethos of their organisation as general principles of the work. In the case of the Localise multicultural school, they also utilised the rules of the school whose premises were used for the project. The VSI (Voluntary Service International) ‘Teenage programme’ also has a social contract, which is a printed list of the rights and responsibilities of the young person, and which is explained to and signed by the young person, and their parent or guardian if they are under 18.
VSI stated the need to allow sufficient time for discussion on the group’s rules which is very important in diverse groups. Young people have very different views on what is reasonable language or behaviour, and this is particularly true of groups with young members from a variety of cultural and family backgrounds. In the VSI residential programme, there is a Circle Meeting at the end of each day, whereby a talking piece is passed around the group, and everyone has their say. Whoever holds the talking piece can speak and the others must listen. This is a very useful way to tease out difficulties that happened during the day.

While most young people drafted the Charter themselves, youth leaders tend to input with regard to certain rules for the group. Some youth workers established the rules as a staff team, based on what issues had arisen before or were likely to become problems within the group. It is important that your group contract is wide-reaching and includes issues of racism and intolerance, even implicitly, so that racist comments or prejudices can be challenged immediately when they arise.

Most groups displayed the group contract when the group met. Galway Diocesan Youth Service (GDYS) displayed it at all times in the No. 4 drop-in centre’s kitchen and hallway. In the case of Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí), the rules of the group are given to each young person to sign personally twice per year. No. 4 drop-in centre also give a copy of the ‘house rules’ to any young person using the service. The rules are included with the client registration form that all young people must sign to use the service.

Most groups found that the group contract was ‘self-maintaining’, in that once the young people had discussed and thought through the rules, they were more likely to govern respect of the rules themselves. YMCA Cork found that the young people would tell others in the Ninos club to speak in English during group work activities.
It is important to be aware of any racist or discriminatory behaviour and attitudes in your group. Some projects spoke of challenging young people through general chats and conversations, while others decided to address racism through participatory activities around identity, exclusion and self-esteem. When working in a mixed group, it is a good idea to split groups into mixed teams so they get to know other young people from different communities when doing activities.

“You can cut off a whole community really by one incident not being addressed properly”… “even small things”…“It would be very much nipping things in the bud, getting to the bottom of it immediately, nothing would be left to imagination or left to chance….. Be very clear about a zero tolerance policy in relation to bullying, any kind of bullying, any racist remarks, any harassment, anything like that”….“That would be really in keeping with the Gaf (Youth Café) policy, as well as Youth Work Ireland’s.” (SPARK youth worker)

Some youth workers mentioned what they called ‘hidden racism’ or a potential for racism - something that the young people often didn’t notice but which came across in general attitudes. For instance, some of the language used alarmed the leaders but not the young people themselves. Some groups design specific sessions to work on these attitudes – ‘moving debates’ can help! It can also be useful to focus on the similarities between different young people, rather than ethnic differences that separate them.

In tackling racism, the SPARK project (Youth Work Ireland Galway) found that simply including young people from diverse backgrounds was not sufficient to become fully inclusive. As with all communities, a hierarchy existed among young people from particular countries having opinions about each other and actively buying into prejudiced attitudes or behaviour. We must always be aware that minority groups and marginalised groups have negative opinions and prejudices that must be challenged. Youth workers should not fall into the trap of believing that once minority groups are included in organisations that that is an end in itself with regard to inclusion, and tackling racism and inequalities.
Like any conflict with young people, there may be other reasons for tensions between ethnic groups, such as issues connected with the young person’s home, experience of school, lack of self-confidence and so on. It is important to work with young people on issues of anger which may manifest as racist comments or bullying. Individual work is fundamental to overcoming this.

Nonetheless, all groups should have a disciplinary procedure in place when someone violates the group contract. Dealing with conflict as soon as it arises was highlighted as crucial by all youth workers. This occurred between all young people, whether they were from different ethnic backgrounds, or of the same nationality. Racist comments or tension should be dealt with as any other breaches of discipline would. A no-tolerance approach to racist attitudes and behaviour is crucial. As staff, you should challenge any comments immediately. In some cases, young people may be suspended or asked to leave the programme.
Additional Resources/Training for developing an Intercultural Group Contract:

- NYCI Resource ‘Let’s Beat Bullying’
  
  [http://www.youthhealth.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Bullying/bully.pdf-complete_and_final_copy](http://www.youthhealth.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Bullying/bully.pdf-complete_and_final_copy). Specific training on this resource is recommended and available through NYCI; see [www.youth.ie/training](http://www.youth.ie/training) for details.
- BeLonG To resources on tackling homophobic bullying contain useful tips [http://www.belongto.org/](http://www.belongto.org/)

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Do you have a group contract when working with a group of young people?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Is the group contract written and agreed upon by the young people and the leader?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Is the group contract displayed during the group sessions?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Is the group contract displayed at all times in your organisation’s premises?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Are copies of the group contract given to the young people to sign and/or keep?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Is the group contract reviewed when new members join the group?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Do your staff and volunteers address racist comments and behaviour?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Do you have a reporting system for incidents of bullying, including discrimination and racism?  
  
  **YES**  **NO**

- Does your organisation have any other mechanisms in place that
Do you discuss issues of stereotyping, prejudice and racism with your group? YES  NO
Step 7 ACTIVITIES

Youth work activities must be appropriate for the particular youth group. Consider factors such as age, gender, religion, culture and language ability when planning activities. Developing their abilities and talents may be an important aspect of the young person's involvement in the youth organisation. Financial resources may be a barrier to participation. Acknowledge and provide space for minority ethnic cultures in the activities. As with all youth work, flexibility is paramount.

Good Practice in planning your activities…

All projects featured in the “12 Steps” employed a range of different activities when working with the young people in their groups. The most important aspect was to consult with the young people on what they were interested in doing.

Youth workers are often unsure of whether an integrated or targeted approach is best when working with young people from a minority ethnic background. In the experience of projects interviewed for this resource, it is important to work based on the needs and wants of the young people themselves. Many of the projects offered individual, targeted sessions as well as integrated group activities (see Step 5 ‘Involvement of Youth’).

Sport is a good way to get young people mixing together, particularly males. No.4 drop-in centre, GDYS (Galway Diocesan Youth Service) participated in the Galway Street Soccer League which was piloted in Galway in September 2008 for one year. Teams included No.4 drop-in centre, Direct Provision Centres (DPCs) in Galway which accommodate asylum seekers, and homeless services in the city. Initially there was little integration between the teams and hostilities between players arose. But according to the No. 4 youth worker, the love of soccer and constant
promotion of teamwork and sportsmanship eventually led to a more open and accepting environment. **Integration of the teams** happened by chance when there were not enough players on the teams for a full match. They either had to play in a mixed team, or not play at all. That worked so well on that occasion that teams have been mixed successfully ever since.

**Costs may be a barrier** for many young people who wish to participate in your programme, particularly for minority ethnic families. YMCA Cork introduced a scheme of a voluntary contribution of €1 for the ‘Ninos’ club, so those who could afford to pay, can. No. 4 drop-in centre in Galway also makes efforts to keep costs down. No. 4 has a low budget, so has to be creative in how it is used. Young people don’t pay to use the shower or eat, but small costs are charged for laundry, printing and photocopying services, which works well. No. 4 drop-in centre also organises two outings per year and the young people are asked to pay a contribution towards the cost of the outing.

Similarly, **transport** can be an obstacle for young people attending your organisation. This can be true in rural or urban settings. In Bishopstown, Ógra Chorcaí’s youth workers knew that transport was often not accessible to the young Travellers. This continues to be a problem, but the youth worker there enlisted the assistance of the Community Gardaí for transport to special events – and constantly searches for creative solutions at other times! For other minority ethnic communities, Localise have found that if the project takes place where the communities already come together, it makes things a lot easier.

“Puppet creation helped young people to mask themselves personally but make a statement on an issue of concern such as name, job, relationship status, likes/dislikes etc. Young people identified issues that affect them, and discussion took place on how they would feel if that was put out in the open to the general public and how their parents would view that”. (Castlebar NYP, Foróige, youth worker)
Identity work is a crucial aspect of all youth work. For young people, opportunities to consider and discuss their identity can be an important way to voice concerns and also affirm their cultural background. The ‘Talking Heads’ puppetry project in Foróige Neighbourhood Youth Project Castlebar explored identity in a very safe way by leading the young people through puppet creation. Initially simulation exercises were used to identify issues for young people, for instance through a moving debate with statements such as “Young people have a bad name in Ballyhaunis”, as well as personal profiles and questionnaires. Drama is also a powerful way to explore identity and young people can act out different emotions like feeling sad, or acting as if you were extremely happy. This helped young people to tap into their feelings as well as imagining their dream wishes for life. Even if you don’t work with a group with members from minority ethnic backgrounds, identity work is still relevant, especially if you are planning on introducing newcomers to a group. Young Irish people may feel that they don’t ‘have’ a culture. But feeling secure in your own cultural background is crucial for integration within society in general.

“I think they want people to understand their situation, where they’re from, and how they come from wonderful, beautiful countries.. But there are difficulties. I think it really bothers them that people see representations of Africa as very desolate, hot, starving people…..They want people to know ‘There’s another side to Africa, there’s another side to where I’m from’.” (SPARK youth worker)

Identity work can occur implicitly or explicitly in activities of your programme. Issues such as racism, discrimination or bullying may need to be dealt with explicitly. Inaccurate information about other cultures, continents and people should also be challenged. The SPARK project (Youth Work Ireland Galway) confirmed that the young people enjoy talking about their country of origin and having frank discussions. Young people coming from Africa are often bothered by
misconceptions about Africa and want it to be balanced by positive images of the beautiful places they come from. They don’t want to be seen as dependent and poor. For non-threatening ways of **exploring identity implicitly**, **cross-cultural games** can be used. VSI (Voluntary Service International) used an activity called ‘Games from our childhood’ where each young person taught the others in the group a game from their own childhood. This activity was very popular as participants got to share a part of their own culture and it also highlighted similarities between many childhood games around the world.

“We play games from our childhood. That’s one thing they really, really enjoy sharing. One game that’s caught on is a game with stones from Somalia called ‘Shop’ and we’ve all learned how to count in Somali and it’s become addictive!” (VSI Teenage Programme Coordinator)

Working with young males and females together can be a barrier for some ethnic and cultural groups getting involved in youth work. Segregation based on gender may be necessary, for instance in activities such as swimming. It may also determine the type of activity on offer. A health club programme of aerobics and yoga run by Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative brought a group of girls from Eastern Europe and Ireland together. (See Step 5 Involvement of Youth)

It is important that **youth organisations support the heritage language and culture of the young person**. In Localise Multicultural School, young people from about 8 different national backgrounds had this opportunity. Like all young people, they like to do activities which they are interested in, but Localise always include some aspects of integration. For them, there has to be that balance. Not recognising or valuing heritage culture means that some young people from minority ethnic backgrounds either won’t come at all to your youth group or they probably won’t come back after one or two sessions. It is clear that youth work organisations need to satisfy both aspects – the integration of young people and preserving heritage identity. For instance, making your youth group an English-only space at all times may not be useful. A group contract should be discussed and **rules decided**
together regarding when English must be spoken, and when young people can speak their native language. YMCA Cork has this balance whereby English is the general language but speaking in one’s native language is allowed in “social space time”.

Many young people will also want to learn about the society and heritage of Ireland, and their local area in particular. In discussions with the young people, YMCA addressed issues of interest to the group, and always included an ‘Irish’ perspective in the conversation. The youth worker described that as a real learning opportunity. The Localise Multicultural School included a module on ‘Learning about your new community’. The group did English language studies and also learned something about Irish heritage through tours to places such as Newgrange. English language support was also very important with the young people from the SPARK Project and Ninos Club (YMCA Cork). Be sure to consider English language ability of participants when planning activities. Very often English might be the second, third or even fourth language of minority ethnic young people, so give them the chance to learn and practice it as much as they can.

“There are different ethnic backgrounds, we want to recognise that and then make a meaningful integration programme. So this is what we were trying to do in the programme of the Multicultural School; we were giving the kids their own ethnic studies in separate groups, and then bringing all of them together for a Localise (Caring in the Community) programme”... “Trying to satisfy both: the integration point and the ethnic identity point”. (Localise Development Officer)

VSI promote volunteerism to young people, and encouraging them to take positive action for change within society.
The young people chose to get involved in a local clean-up and contacted the local tidy town group to offer their time as volunteers to clean-up a local wooded
area. This contact with the local community proved to be vital in the success of the project, as the young people were praised for their work and felt a great sense of self-esteem. Additionally, the community learned a lot in meeting the young people from different cultural backgrounds. The Localise Multicultural School also gave the young people the chance to become involved in community-based work. At Christmas and at Easter they collected food and made cards for other young people in disadvantaged families in the area. In March they organised a St Patricks’ festival party for young athletes with special needs.

“One thing I’d like to say is that I never mentioned that this was an intercultural youth project to the young people. Because I realised through discussion with adults and young people that Irish people often assume interculturalism is just about minorities and the Irish won’t come along. If you are going to have a community activity, call it a Family Fun day or whatever and you tend to have everyone there.” (Tyrrelstown youth worker)

Cultural events are often popular among schools and youth organisations. Cultural events are often useful to allow attendees to express their own culture and experience others. However such events often only address the ‘tip of the iceberg’ when it comes to cultural understanding, and need to be followed-up with different fora, discussions and other opportunities to interact. Cultural events can also be focused on expressing differences - not similarities - and don’t take into account mixed ethnicities and identities of young people living in Ireland. Asking a young person to constantly focus on their culture of origin, overlooks the fact that the young person may have been born in Ireland, grown up in the local community, and perhaps never even been to the country their family originally comes from. Organising a ‘family day’ or ‘food festival’ – rather than an ‘intercultural event’ - can sometimes be more popular among Irish and minority ethnic communities as it makes everyone feel welcome and included, without constantly pointing out differences between groups.
Additional Resources/Training for planning activities:

- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  [http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit](http://www.youth.ie/youth_work/resources_for_youth_workers/access_all_areas_diversity_toolkit)
- NYCI intercultural training, in particular ‘Practical supports for Intercultural Youth Work’
- Practical Guidelines for doing Intercultural Youth Work
- [www.intercultural.ie](http://www.intercultural.ie) or [http://www.intercultural.ie/practice_guidelines](http://www.intercultural.ie/practice_guidelines)
- NYCI resource on activities not requiring language [www.intercultural.ie](http://www.intercultural.ie)

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Does your youth organisation advertise your programme of activities in the community? YES NO
- Does your youth organisation have a good range of activities, including
  - activities free of/low charge, YES NO
  - activities not requiring proficiency in English YES NO
  - activities which build the skills of the young people YES NO
  - activities which promote heritage language/culture of minority ethnic groups YES NO
- Does your youth organisation consult with the young people on your programme, for instance, through YES NO
questionnaires, suggestion boxes and discussions?

- Do you have contact details of other relevant youth work organisations to refer young people to as needed?  
  
  YES  
  NO
Step 8 NETWORKING

Your youth organisation should build relationships with local stakeholders including community and religious leaders, families and existing networks of minority ethnic groups, as well as those of the majority community. This will help to allay fears and concerns by building trust. Invite parents and families to open days. Make time to meet parents individually if necessary. Translate basic information about your organisation where possible. Look for opportunities to work with other local groups. Also liaise with formal structures such as schools, ‘an Garda Síochána’ (police service in Ireland), churches, and other youth projects, clubs and services.

Who to network with and how to do it effectively...

Networking can be seen as time-consuming but it is something that can be built into everything your youth organisation does. Such networking is crucial in working together to support the young person, and meet their needs. All projects highlighted the need to network with community-based groups, and inter-agency fora, such as:

- Local Youth Work organisations
- Vocational Education Committees (VECs)
- VEC Youth Officers
- Schools
- Home-School Liaison Officers
- An Garda Síochána
- English Language Schools
- The Health Service Executive (HSE)
- City And County Partnerships
- County Councils and County Development Boards
- Third level institutions who can provide volunteers
- Religious Organisations (Churches, Chaplaincies, Mosques and Religious groups)
- Family Centres
- Groups For Elderly People
- Intercultural Committees
- Minority ethnic-led networks/associations
- Other community-based organisations
“Within the community I was very involved on the Intercultural Sub-Committee in the Greater Blanchardstown area. In the youth club we were keen to do activities on breaking down barriers and realising that you have more in common with others than you think. Some of this work was also about breaking down the imaginary lines between local areas – like Huntstown, Corduff, Tyrrelstown etc. They have urban legends about each other so we planned activities across areas to bring the young people together.” (Tyrrelstown youth worker)

If you are supporting young refugees and asylum seekers, it can be useful to refer to specific support agencies, such as:

- Refugee Information Service ([www.ris.ie](http://www.ris.ie))
- Refugee Legal Service ([www.legalaidboard.ie](http://www.legalaidboard.ie))
- Refugee Support Groups
- Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) ([http://www.ria.gov.ie/](http://www.ria.gov.ie/))
- Direct Provision Centres; from above

Linking in with organisations of minority ethnic communities is also crucial. As Localise experienced, it is important to go to where minority ethnic communities meet to engage with them. It is also very important to look at what’s already going on in your community, as most minority ethnic groups are already quite active. Many families and parents will also have a trusting relationship with such groups in their local area, particularly for families living in Direct Provision Centres. For example, Mayo Intercultural Action assisted the Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Foróige, in identifying young people for their intercultural project, and followed-up with parents ensuring that they had understood what the youth work projects involved. Some groups may be able to provide translation and interpretation services. Contact details for intercultural groups around Ireland are available from Integrating Ireland, New Community Partnerships (NCPs) and others.
“When working with people of different ethnic backgrounds it’s good to look at things which are already going on, because there is a lot of stuff already going on within the communities... All the communities have a sense of organising themselves. If people from a community are here more than three or four years, there will already be a group working so it’s good to get contacts with people who are already organised.” (Localise Development Officer)

Although translation of basic information into native languages of the target groups can be helpful, most groups did not translate their information in leaflets or brochures. Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Foróige, in worked with resettled refugees who had very basic levels of English when they arrived in the community. Ensuring the provision of an interpreter through the resettlement programme (managed by RIA) was very important in communicating with the parents and families.

Working with young people from a minority ethnic background requires a strong, trusting relationship between the youth worker and the parents or guardians. An open attitude and respect are essential, and establishing a good reputation for youth work among the community is key. Building such a relationship takes time and commitment on the part of the youth worker, and is greatly aided by meeting the parents through other points of contact, such as schools, teachers and religious communities. It is important to explain what youth work actually is, and what your organisation provides. Some parents may not be fully convinced of the value of youth work. For YMCA in Cork, youth work is attractive to parents when it is introduced through something they want or need such as skills development, English classes and homework support offered by Ninos club.

Engaging with parents from new communities in Ireland is similar to the approach adopted by youth workers working with young Travellers. Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí) provides a comprehensive professional service directly to the young people attached to the project, and the workers have also facilitated Cooking
– Health & Nutrition, First Aid & Fire Safety, and Sexual Health courses for the parents. Parental involvement is seen as a crucial element to the work conducted with young people. Other initiatives include giving parents a Parents’ Room while young people attended youth groups, engaging with them regularly, contacting parents immediately, especially if the young person is absent or there is a change in programme. YMCA had a different experience. Parents checked in initially before the young people started to attend the Ninos club, but after that parents are hardly ever involved – it seems the young people like to keep their parents away! However this was not an issue, as YMCA had secured the trust of the parents in advance through the schools, and the Youth Information Centre. Many African parents also trusted the ‘Christian’ ethos of YMCA.

**Working with separated children seeking asylum** also requires a lot of networking and cooperation with agencies. As the VSI (Voluntary Service International) youth programme coordinator stated, such young people do not have the usual social supports from a family living in Ireland; even the basic role of a parent in getting their teenagers up and out of bed in the morning for a youth work activity is missing in their lives! So it is important to get to know the manager of the HSE accommodation where they live, and the social workers assigned to each young person.

Some young people and parents will want to be involved in a **youth work group that is specific to their ethnic, cultural or linguistic (language) background**. Some young people will join such groups on a temporary basis until they become confident to join a mainstream youth organisation or other activity in their area. Linking with other youth organisations is very important to support the young people to have confidence in joining an activity or youth club that they enjoy. Young people may want to join a specific youth work activity such as Scouting, or sport. It is important to help the young person understand the options available. For example, VSI worked jointly with ECO-UNESCO who offered young people the opportunity to become involved in environmental awareness programmes. The collaboration of experience between the two organisations worked really well.
“Just because they’re from the ‘target group’ and they’re marginalised doesn’t mean they have to join our activity”...”We realised probably the ideal way to go is to actually start putting other organisations in contact (with the young people) through partnership projects.” (VSI Teenage Programme Coordinator)

Minority ethnic parents will also worry for their children’s safety in youth organisations. **Outreach** is important and many projects undertook home visits to parents and families, both in outreach before young people joined the group and on an on-going basis to communicate information to parents, and check for any concerns. Bishopstown Youth Project conducted **home visits** twice a year to all parents of young people attending the project.

A flexible approach is necessary when engaging minority ethnic communities in youth work. Foróige Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative in Dublin provided a **drop-in facility as well as conducting outreach**. Going out to meet the young people on the streets of Tyrrelstown was crucial to getting them involved. This was a slow process and it took the youth worker about 3-4 months of contact to build up the necessary trust within the community.

**Encourage minority ethnic adults to become involved in your organisation as volunteers and youth workers**— this will help build trust with new communities in your local area. Advertising for volunteers through local newspapers, local libraries, the internet and volunteering centres can help. Again it is important to include a clear description of youth work, what your organisation offers and other procedures such as Child Protection and Garda Vetting.

“The networking events have strengthened our links with others who were present. When we see them at other events, they come and chat or vice versa which would not have happened as much in the past and we are discussing a number of possible follow-on actions.” (NYCI networking event participant)
It is also a good idea to network with other youth work organisations in your area. NYCI (National Youth Council of Ireland) organised networking events in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Monaghan and Waterford in 2009. Some events brought youth workers and volunteers together to hear personal accounts of good practice examples in intercultural youth work; others aimed at introducing youth work organisations and minority ethnic members of the community to each other. Youth workers can learn a lot from each other, and sometimes things have happened in other youth organisations that you would not be aware of. Share information on what works in intercultural youth work.
Additional Resources/Training for networking:

- Practical Guidelines for doing Intercultural Youth Work
- www.intercultural.ie or http://www.intercultural.ie/practice_guidelines
- NYCI Training on ‘Practical Supports in Intercultural Youth Work’
- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  http://www.youth.ie/diversity (for a list of relevant organisations working with and led by minority ethnic and cultural communities)
- NYCI reports on networking events on www.intercultural.ie
- NYCI flyer on Intercultural Youth Work (with sections translated into 8 languages) http://www.intercultural.ie/youth_work
- Contact your VEC Youth Officer through the local VEC in your area
  http://www.ivea.ie/committees_search.htm
- Volunteering Ireland http://www.volunteer.ie/index.htm
- Volunteer Centres Ireland http://www.volunteer.ie/-about-us-.html
- Integrating Ireland www.integratingireland.ie

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Has your organisation conducted meetings with local representatives of minority ethnic communities?
  YES  NO

- Has your organisation organised a specific event for parents/guardians?
  YES  NO

- Has your organisation produced a leaflet describing your work in simple English or translated?
  YES  NO

- Does your organisation have contact details of the organisations in your local area that represent minority ethnic groups /communities?
  YES  NO

- Are you aware of other initiatives by local youth organisations in intercultural youth work?
  YES  NO
**Step 9 POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

An intercultural policy – like any other policy – is a kind of roadmap that your organisation lays out for you and others to follow. It sets out your aims and principles and how you are going to achieve these. It places the work you are doing in a legal context by citing equality legislation and how it relates to working with young people from a minority ethnic or cultural background. It also sets out disciplinary procedures for situations when your stated principles are broken either by staff, volunteers or members.

Policies are statements of practice. They should reflect your practice and be fully implemented. Different organisations take different approaches to this. Some opt to write an Intercultural Strategy which sets out a more detailed way of achieving intercultural youth work while others write Inclusion Policies that cover intercultural youth work together with working with other marginalised young people. Whatever approach is taken it is important that it is written in consultation with all your team and that as a group you take ownership of it. It is also crucial that all of your staff, volunteers and members are aware of it and familiar with it.

**Good Practice in developing your policy…**

Groups tend to be at various different stages in terms of setting their work on a policy footing. Localise, for example, are currently drafting their constitution. Within one of its sections entitled ‘Caring in the Community’ they will be able to include what they describe as ‘their integration policy’.

Some groups belong to much bigger organisations and it is here that the responsibility for policy development lies. For both the Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP) and Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, this is the case with both being part of Foróige. While Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative was specifically set up as an intercultural project, Castlebar NYP has a remit to work with young people at risk and as such they have an intercultural focus as a number of young people in their area from minority ethnic backgrounds have been identified as having personal,
social, and educational needs. Both would fall under Foróige’s principles and ethos. To support its groups nationally, Foróige Headquarters have developed an Intercultural Strategy – initially rolled out in the Blanchardstown and Tallaght areas of Dublin. In 2010 the Strategy will be rolled out nationally and will offer an intercultural procedural framework for all Foróige youth groups in the country. Similarly, the SPARK project (Youth Work Ireland Galway) relies on the policy framework set out by the head office of Youth Work Ireland Galway who have an equality statement in place that sets out good practice and this would include young people from a minority ethnic background as well as Travellers.

“Policies aren’t as hard to write as people think. They start off with the organisation’s mission statement and guiding principles. Then a policy statement that says you are committed to intercultural youth work. Then you give the reasons for doing it (such as demographics in your community). After that you lay out what the responsibility of staff members is toward interculturalism and how you will implement the policy. This follows with a piece on your complaints and disciplinary procedures and finally a contextual piece on equality legislation. We have a template at NYCI and a 2-day training course to help people through it.” (NYCI Intercultural Officer)

Youth groups should include anti-racism measures in their group contract. This process can in turn be used to adopt a wider Anti-Racism Code of Practice for the entire youth organisation as part of policy development.

Because of what is perceived as the complexity of writing a policy that would cover all of an organisation’s activities, some groups have found ways to write procedural documents for themselves as smaller groups within a larger structure. This has been the case for the No. 4 drop-in centre (Galway Diocesan Youth Services) who have decided to write their own intercultural strategy as a guide going forward.
Additional Resources/Training on developing your Policy:

- NYCI training, particularly “Developing Intercultural Policies and Implementation Plans” [www.intercultural.ie/training](http://www.intercultural.ie/training)
- Equality Authority [www.equalityauthority.ie](http://www.equalityauthority.ie)
- Anti-Racism Code of Practice template available from [www.intercultural.ie](http://www.intercultural.ie)

How would you rate?/How is your organisation doing?

- Does your organisation have an Intercultural policy or Strategy in place and in practice?  
  - YES  
  - NO
- Does your organisation have an Anti-Racism Code of Practice?  
  - YES  
  - NO
- Is interculturalism explicitly stated as an aim of your work in any of the other policies of your organisation?  
  - YES  
  - NO
- Does staff receive training on equality legislation?  
  - YES  
  - NO
- Does your organisation have a non-denominational policy?  
  - YES  
  - NO
Step 10 RESOURCES

Your youth organisation can avail of a wide range of resources on intercultural youth work. If you identify useful resources, please let us know. You may also be involved in developing resources for intercultural youth work. Taking part in training is an invaluable source of information. It gives you a chance to meet other youth workers and discuss problems and solutions. It is also an opportunity to ask questions. Training is available from (the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) on issues such as tackling racism, intercultural awareness and developing intercultural policies and projects.

Good practice – Good Resources...

In general, the youth work projects featured in this resource, used a broad range of resources in their intercultural youth work, sourced from NGOs (non-governmental organisations), the NYCI, the Department of Education and Science, and resources from other contacts and volunteers.

“I was very involved with other youth groups within the Greater Blanchardstown Area... working across areas like Huntstown, Corduff, Tyrellstown, Hartstown. We put together international quizzes, flag-making workshops, and other activities aimed at getting young people to reflect on what is identity, integration, racism etc. We had another activity called ‘Around the World in 5 Days’. It’s about creating your own country – the young people imagine they’re on a deserted island and they have to create everything themselves, laws, flags, mascots, constitution etc. and work out how they are going to exist together and integrate”. (Tyrrelstown youth worker)

Youth workers said that events which brought representatives of the youth work sector together were invaluable in terms of sharing information and problem-solving. Events included training courses, and showcases such as NYCI ‘What’s doing?’ events, which invited people to come, see and speak to youth workers from five locally-based intercultural youth work projects in each of three locations;
Dublin, Galway and Cork. NYCI also organised networking events called ‘What’s next?’ between the youth sector and minority ethnic communities in Galway, Waterford and Monaghan, which introduced participants to what was happening locally in their area.

**Local events can also be a huge resource for your work.** The Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative (Foróige), benefitted greatly from becoming involved in community-wide initiatives in the area, such as football leagues, art festivals and in particular a nationwide music project that the youth group participated in by creating a rap song.

In terms of working with young people from different backgrounds, one observation was that **many of the resources are more suitable for a classroom-style of learning**, despite the fact that they should be focusing on youth work as non-formal education. Resources very often require strong literacy skills for young participants. Youth workers must search for suitable resources for the group they are working with.

Youth workers and volunteers should also be aware that **many resources reflect a mono-cultural perspective** - in that the case studies are all about ‘the Other’ in another country – with very few examples focusing on equality and diversity in Ireland. We should seek to balance this and represent all sides. Case studies in the resources may also be very close to the true life story of many of young people you work with, in particular the separated children, other asylum seekers and refugees, so we need to be sensitive to this.

If youth workers worked in larger team settings and had appropriate funding, many felt that they could **develop their own resources based on their own experiences**. This has taken place, for instance, in YMCA who have developed programmes such as ‘Y- Share Our World’.
Additional Resources/Training:

The youth work projects featured in this resource recommended the following resources for intercultural youth work:

**Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project, ‘Talking Heads’ project, Foróige**

- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
- NYCI Resource “Life Stories - Exploring Identity with Young People”
  [http://www.youthdeved.ie/resources/download_publications/(offset)/10](http://www.youthdeved.ie/resources/download_publications/(offset)/10)
- NYCI Resource “All Different, All Equal”
  [http://www.youthdeved.ie/resources/download_publications](http://www.youthdeved.ie/resources/download_publications)
- Irish Aid development education materials.
- Resources such as ‘One World, Our World’ are available through

**Localise, Multicultural School**

- The Localise Multicultural School relied on a network of volunteers who often came from various cultural centres in Ireland. Localise invited the volunteers as guest speakers to the multicultural school to give classes on different cultures e.g. Japanese, French etc.
- Resources produced by Localise include
  - the CSPE (Civil, Social and Political Education) manual for schools
  - the ‘Localise manual’ for training volunteers. For more information contact Localise [www.localise.ie](http://www.localise.ie)
No. 4 drop-in centre (Galway Diocesan Youth Services (GDYS))

- NYCI draft ‘Towards A Quality Mark in Intercultural Youth Work: 12 Steps to Best Practice’ – now ‘Promoting Quality in Intercultural Youth Work: 12 Steps to Good Practice’
- NYCI training ‘Intercultural Awareness and Cultural Competency’
  www.intercultural.ie/training

Ógra Chorcaí, Bishopstown Youth Project

- Excellent relationship with other community-based services, especially the youth workers from Traveller Visibility Group (TVG), Cork

Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, Foróige

- Greater Blanchardstown Area Intercultural Sub-Committee and community-wide initiatives organised through that and other fora.
- Outreach took place through youth organisations in neighbouring areas to assess what a youth service in Tyrrelstown should offer.

VSI (Voluntary Service International), Teenage Programme

- Council of Europe’s Youth Partnership T-kit (training kit) and in particular the one on intercultural learning: http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/4/Tkit_4_EN
- Other organisations such as Co-exist (www.coexist.ie), a peace education group based in Dundalk, Co. Louth, as well as experienced peace education facilitators who volunteer with VSI.
- SALTO youth resources http://www.salto-youth.net/
Youth Work Ireland Galway, SPARK Project

- ‘Where is home?’ Calypso Theatre company ([calypso@tinet.ie](mailto:calypso@tinet.ie))
- NYCI Development Education Resources e.g. Life Stories; All Different, All Equal, all available from [http://www.youthdeved.ie/resources/download_publications](http://www.youthdeved.ie/resources/download_publications)
- Department of Education and Science Intercultural Guidelines – aims at mainstreaming interculturalism in schools:
  - Primary Schools
  - Post-primary Schools

YMCA Cork, Ninos Club

- Various films used for discussion
How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Has your organisation developed a list/file of resources and activities on intercultural youth work? 
  YES  NO

- Are useful resources for intercultural youth work shared with all staff? 
  YES  NO

- Has your organisation gathered information on cultural and ethnic groups represented in your area? 
  YES  NO

- Does your organisation liaise with other services in the form of fora, committees or community-based initiatives? 
  YES  NO

- Has your staff completed training on interculturalism? 
  YES  NO

- Have your volunteers completed training on interculturalism? 
  YES  NO
Step 11 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is crucial to undertake regular monitoring of your intercultural youth programmes. You should begin with a needs analysis of the group; and follow-up regularly to monitor what the young people want and need from your service. Your organisation should have specific aims and objectives for the group that can be checked by staff. Evaluation should also include the young people themselves, especially minority members of the group. All monitoring should include attendance, reasons for absences and so on.

Good practice in monitoring and evaluating intercultural youth work...

Evaluation is crucial to any group, and all projects interviewed for this ’12 Steps’ guide used several means of evaluation and on-going monitoring in their groups; including staff meetings, one-to-one work, informal discussions and written evaluations.

The Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Foróige, used different types of assessment, particularly to establish the needs, likes and further development of the group. Evaluation and observation in the SPARK project (Youth Work Ireland, Galway) takes place based on the young person’s original needs-assessment.

It is crucial that evaluation is carried out with the young people directly as well as through others involved. A focus group or youth committee can be established for on-going feedback.

Different ways to monitor the needs and wants of the group include a graffiti comment board so that young people can post comments they want to share (Castlebar NYP Foróige) and an anonymous suggestion box (No. 4 drop-in centre, Galway Diocesan Youth Service).
which is checked monthly and contents considered at staff meetings. Any suggestions that the organisation can facilitate are implemented subject to demand and resources.

“Yes we do evaluation and a certain amount of observation too... Changes in their behaviour, improvements... It would really be evaluation based on their original needs-assessment. Do they feel their English has improved? Have things started to come together for them?” (SPARK youth worker)

Informal monitoring and evaluation can happen in **group discussions or having one-to-one conversations with the young person.** The SPARK project uses informal chats to establish how the young people are getting on. The SPARK youth worker has found that if the young person’s level of English language is improving, this is normally a good sign. Young people who are experiencing trauma can still progress; though it might be slower or less obvious, it is still important to view it as progress.

Evaluation must be constant. No. 4 drop-in centre (Galway Diocesan Youth Services) discusses all activities, initiatives, outings and meal ideas with all service users; and records suggestions and feed-back from service users. In group evaluation, VSI (Voluntary Service International) has used “Circle Meetings” in their residential projects where the young people and staff/leaders come together every day to evaluate the day. **Checking in with young people on a regular, consistent basis is crucial.**

“We have daily Circle Meetings where we all sit down.. You can only speak when you’re holding the talking piece. It means everyone gets a chance to say what they want and it’s not just the same people speaking up”. (VSI Teenage Programme Coordinator)

Monitoring can also be assisted by **talking to other agencies who work with the young people or their families.** The Castlebar NYP Foróige consulted with Mayo Intercultural Action, a group that was working with the mothers of the young people in order to get feedback. YMCA Cork also received feedback on their Ninos Club from the schools which the young people they worked with were attending.
Becoming involved in **inter-agency fora and showcases** is also a good way to hear and see what other youth groups are doing, such as the National Youth Council of Ireland’s (NYCI) events, European Youth Forum events and so on. The youth worker from Tyrrelstown Youth initiative (Foróige) attended a European Youth Forum event in Brussels on sharing good intercultural practices in youth work.

**Attendance is one very obvious but sometimes neglected way to monitor your group.** It is important to follow-up with a young person who has been attending your group and then stops coming. The youth worker in Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative found it useful to speak to the young people on the street if they stopped attending, and find out why. The Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí) also follows up by phoning the home of the young person, and speaking to them directly if they fail to show for a session.

> “I took away with me a feeling of belonging, new friendships and a great sense of myself.” (VSI Teenage Programme participant)

**Written evaluations** are also important and many groups use questionnaires. But written evaluations don’t have to be traditional or ‘formal’. VSI use a tool called ‘reflection feet’ where young people take a card or paper cut out in the shape of a foot and they can write positive or negative things about the day. The young people also write postcards to themselves in their own languages which VSI will post to them after the project. VSI have also given the young people a disposable camera for residential projects, and each day they were given time to take a photo reflecting how they felt that day.

> “I’m learning the important thing that is dialogue with persons when you work with them, even if we don’t have the same ideas in the start because the results are incredible!” (VSI Teenage Programme participant)

**External evaluation can also be useful** as it provides an objective assessment of your work. It is important to have the perspective of someone working outside the organisation. It is also important to demonstrate to funders that you have fulfilled the aims and objectives of your project, especially when you plan to apply for
further funding. YMCA Cork had an evaluation of the Ninos Club done by a student at Waterford Institute of Technology which the student did as part of her own course work. For the YMCA youth worker, it helped them to value their own work even more. In Ninos, they are so closely involved in the day-to-day running of things that they might not see the impact that the Club has on the bigger picture. Having the external evaluation done helped immensely, in terms of getting feedback from parents and teachers as well as key findings and recommendations from another perspective.

At some point, staff and leaders must also take time to take stock of how the organisation and their group are doing. Regular staff meetings are useful, but some youth workers may wish to take a full-day or other occasion to fully evaluate what is going on. Feedback to senior management is also essential.
Additional Resources/Training on Monitoring and Evaluation:

- NYCI resource “Why don’t we?”
  [http://www.youth.ie/resources/why_don_t_we_youth_participation_resource_pack](http://www.youth.ie/resources/why_don_t_we_youth_participation_resource_pack)
- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector
  [http://www.youth.ie/diversity](http://www.youth.ie/diversity)

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Have you completed a needs-analysis of your group?  YES  NO
- Have you completed a needs-analysis with individuals?  YES  NO
- Have you completed a self-assessment process to identify gaps in your organisation (e.g. the NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit checklists)?  YES  NO
- Have you repeated the self-assessment process at periodic intervals?  YES  NO
- Does your organisation have a youth focus group or youth advisory committee?  YES  NO
- Does your organisation consult formally with the young people to monitor and evaluate your work (e.g. through written procedures, formal interviews)?  YES  NO
- Does your organisation consult informally with the young people to monitor and evaluate your work?  YES  NO
Mainstreaming interculturalism involves an approach that plays itself out across all activities and policy areas of the youth work sector. It involves a review of existing youth practices to determine if cultural diversity has been planned for and embedded in all aspects of your groups’ activities. Mainstreaming interculturalism assumes that the goal of all youth activities should be the integration of diverse cultural groups both within the organisation itself and in the wider community. To achieve this, all staff and volunteers must understand and support interculturalism. In essence, “mainstreaming” interculturalism is about having positive attitudes and values which in turn lead to good practice.

As a society, we have learned to look at all aspects of our services in terms of gender and to include people with disabilities. Interculturalism is about looking at all aspects of your organisation from the perspective of all ethnic and cultural communities - essentially adopting a cultural lens to examine how young people from these communities will be affected by your work- and taking appropriate action. This will be evidenced by applying the best practices outlined in this resource in the most appropriate and effective way for your particular group.

**Good Practice in Mainstreaming Interculturalism…**

In an intercultural youth organisation, all young people will feel like they belong and they matter for who they are. The young people’s cultural and religious practices – including those of the majority culture - will be understood and acknowledged in a way that is natural for all. Acknowledging and valuing everyone’s cultural identity is important and subtle gestures can be very positive, such as celebrating festivals or ensuring appropriate foods are provided according to cultural or religious practices within the group.

However, we must remember that all people are individuals irrespective of cultural identity. People who share a common language, religion or background are not automatically alike or have the same needs. Many young people do not like to
be singled out or made to be an example for their cultural group. Your organisation should not make an issue of or draw unwanted attention to cultures of origin. As in youth work generally, you must treat every young person for themselves.

“For us it was never a question of why (include these young Travellers) it was always a question of why not? That’s how we approached intercultural youth work. To us it was just about applying good youth work principles – meeting young people where they are at”. (Bishopstown youth worker)

In Bishopstown Youth Project (Ógra Chorcaí) the influence of Traveller culture in the whole group became apparent over time, as the young Travellers excelled in many activities and produced work that reflected their culture. However, when the Bishopstown youth worker had introduced the young Travellers to the group, he chose not to tell the other young people that they were Travellers. The youth worker did however make sure that the activities on offer were of interest to the young Travellers – wood carving and other crafts for example. Meanwhile the youth leader made regular visits to the halting site where the young Travellers lived to make links with the parents and to reassure them about what was happening in the youth group and to invite them to take part in parent and volunteer groups – which some did.

“In time the cultural identity of the young Travellers was made known to the group by the Travellers themselves, when they felt comfortable. One day they were sharing stories with the others and one young lad was telling the group how mad he was to be sent out of class that day and how he had felt picked on, when another young lad spoke out, “wow I thought that only happened to us Travellers. That’s how the others learned the young people were Travellers.” (Bishopstown youth worker)

Intercultural youth work is about attitude and values. Putting intercultural attitudes and values into practice means adopting an approach that reaches across all activities and policy areas of your work. Reviewing current practice in the light of
cultural considerations has led to different responses from different youth work organisations. For example:

- Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP), Foróige, “Foróige Neighbourhood Youth Project (NYP) Castlebar realised that generally they would have to think more carefully about their use of English in all groups. Participants come from different cultural and national backgrounds with varying levels of English, and so terminology would have to be explained more thoroughly, for instance when discussing sexual health, drugs and alcohol, social skills, personal development and mental health issues. They also devised the ‘Talking Heads’ puppetry project as an art, drama and music project so that it would not rely too much on English language ability but it would hold everyone’s interest and be enjoyable.

- Foróige’s response in Blanchardstown was to develop an Intercultural Strategy that would first be rolled out in Blanchardstown and Tallaght (Dublin) and would later roll out across to all Foróige groups in the country – thus matching practice to policy for a more sustainable approach to intercultural youth work.

- SPARK (Youth Work Ireland Galway) work with asylum seekers and refugees and they find it difficult that their work is done in isolation from a legal process over which they have little influence or control. SPARK has also found that at community level, racism is still pervasive. The SPARK project works collaboratively with many local services to overcome these barriers. Mainstreaming interculturalism is about everyone in a community working holistically and collaboratively together. As a result, the more embedded interculturalism is in one’s own practice, the more it will become part of other organisations’ processes. Many youth groups have challenged and changed other services within the wider community by their positive practices.
“Through the Community projects is the best way to integrate... Not really through workshops or talking but to bring the people together and do something positive together”...“There’s an increasingly positive image of immigrants in the local community, especially through projects like the Polish group working for free in renovating houses”. (Localise Development Officer)

Perhaps the **most exciting aspect of mainstreaming intercultural youth work is the effect the work has on the wider community.** All of the groups we interviewed spoke very positively about the effect that they had on their communities through their work in improving cultural awareness and understanding. For many, having a specific project with a public focus like ‘Talking Heads’ puppetry project or Bishopstown Youth Project allowed the wider community to see the work and to reassert the positive influence of young people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The VEC tutors that worked on the Bishopstown youth project facilitated a number of shows that were seen around the community. There were also exhibitions of their work in the area – at a local library and in Wilton Park House. Castlebar NYP worked with bodies such as Mayo Intercultural Action and later with NYCI (National Youth Council of Ireland) who were able to use the learning from the ‘Talking Heads’ project to further promote widespread intercultural work. Castlebar NYP Foróige also spoke about the **positive energy in a culturally diverse group** and the pleasure to be gained from this. They found how important it is ‘not to be afraid to ask questions’ so as to understand and ‘identify the notable differences and similarities between people’.

“The positive images displayed in the drop-in centre of different countries - especially those which are often portrayed negatively or sensationaly in the media - have served to increase the knowledge and awareness of our service-users and has lessened stereotypical views of other countries and their people”. (No.4 drop-in centre GDYS youth worker)
Groups spoke about **cultural awareness and understanding taking place at a local community level**, especially between the young people who participate in the wider youth organisation and the young people from minority ethnic or cultural backgrounds. SPARK noted how the ‘Irish’ group realised how much they have in common with young people from other countries. The intercultural work at YMCA Cork has been ongoing for some time and they have had the opportunity to take part in a number of public events, including giving talks to teacher training groups and a development education group, taking part in public events such as Mayfield Arts Global Fest and also initiating a new fundraising programme (Euro day) after introducing an African guest to one of their regular groups of young mothers. Their increased profile has even shifted the opinions of Cork County Councillors who now actively promote Ninos club. Localise, on the other hand, work significantly at community level doing voluntary work, and this has led to other Irish communities initiating contact and asking to be included in new projects.

“Intercultural youth work is worth the investment for the youth work sector. There is lots of potential there. I think that there are a lot of young people from many ethnic backgrounds and they are all equally talented and they can contribute to society.” (Localise Development Officer)

**Working in multi-ethnic settings can present challenges for different groups.** Some groups have spoken about how they have learnt over time and with experience to respond to the specific needs of groups such as young asylum seekers in VSI (Voluntary Service International), SPARK and Ninos Club in YMCA Cork, and young Travellers (Bishopstown Youth Project). It wasn’t something they felt they needed to know about in detail before doing this work – it involved having the right attitude and asking questions. However, in coming to understand the specific needs of particularly vulnerable young people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds the issue of the appropriateness of ‘positive action’ has been raised within youth work teams. All of these organisations now promote ‘positive action’ for certain groups. For them, it has meant advocating for the rights of these groups to be treated more favourably, in order to realise equality of outcome with their peers.
SPARK spoke about becoming aware of conflicts at home between parents and young people, particularly those connected to the stresses of the asylum process, cultural conflict, and expectations from the family. This can be very difficult for some of the young people and the need for the stability of a youth group at these times becomes even more crucial. For other groups, challenges also included the need to identify volunteers and staff who would continue this work and the realisation that intercultural work is often poorly resourced.

“They see they have so much in common with people from another country. Sometimes they come to us and they don’t realise – there’s a tendency for people to stick with their own group. And when you open it up a little bit, they realise that they have a lot in common, that they can be friends. They can get over the barrier of judging someone based on pre-conceived ideas that they might have”. (SPARK youth worker)
Additional Resources/Training in mainstreaming Interculturalism:

- NYCI ‘Access All Areas’ Diversity Toolkit for the youth sector  
  [http://www.youth.ie/diversity](http://www.youth.ie/diversity)
- NYCI Intercultural training, particularly ‘Embedding Interculturalism in Youth Work’  
  [www.intercultural.ie/training](http://www.intercultural.ie/training)

How would you rate? /How is your organisation doing?

- Are your staff and volunteers openly committed to interculturalism?  
  YES  NO

- Does your organisation have:
  - an intercultural policy?  
    YES  NO
  - an intercultural code of practice?  
    YES  NO
  - an intercultural strategy/implementation plan?  
    YES  NO

- Does your organisation carry out reviews of your work to identify gaps and make changes?  
  YES  NO

- Does your staff have access to ongoing training?  
  YES  NO

- Does your organisation network within your community on interculturalism and related issues?  
  YES  NO

- Has your organisation taken action on some or all of the 12 steps outlined in this document?  
  YES  NO
Projects featured:

- Castlebar Neighbourhood Youth Project ‘Talking Heads’ project, Foróige

- Localise, Multicultural School [www.localise.ie](http://www.localise.ie)

- No. 4 Drop-in centre, Galway Diocesan Youth Service (GDYS)

- Ógra Chorcaí, Bishopstown Youth Project; contactable through this forum:
  [http://homepage.eircom.net/~clvyc/home.html](http://homepage.eircom.net/~clvyc/home.html)

- Tyrrelstown Youth Initiative, Foróige
  [http://www.foroige.ie/index.cfm?fuseaction=Local_Youth_Services&content_id=16](http://www.foroige.ie/index.cfm?fuseaction=Local_Youth_Services&content_id=16)

- VSI (Voluntary Service International), Dublin, Teenage Programme
  [http://www.vsi.ie/volunteer/teenage.html](http://www.vsi.ie/volunteer/teenage.html)

- Youth Work Ireland, Galway, SPARK (Support Project for Asylum Seeker and Refugee Kids)

- YMCA Cork, Ninos Club [http://www.ymcacork.org/index.htm](http://www.ymcacork.org/index.htm)

Do you have a youth service, project or club you think should be featured on our ‘Good practice’ site? If so, please contact us at: [intercultural@nyci.ie](mailto:intercultural@nyci.ie)
**Glossary**

‘Your organisation’ – In order to be a guide for the whole youth sector in promoting intercultural youth work, the “12 Steps” uses the term ‘your organisation’ to refer to all youth projects, clubs and services within the youth work sector in Ireland.

**Terminology**

- **Asylum Seeker** - a person seeking to be granted protection as a refugee outside their country of origin, and is awaiting the determination of his/her status (See below: Refugee). In Ireland, the asylum process is a legal system which decides who actually qualifies as a refugee and is then entitled to remain in Ireland. Those judged not to be refugees can be deported. If a child under 18 years arrives in Ireland without parents or guardians, and seeks asylum, he/she is called a ‘Separated Child Seeking Asylum’.

- **Charter** – a Code of Practice or Group Contract

- **Direct Provision** – accommodation provided to asylum seekers while their asylum claim is being processed in Ireland. Direct Provision Centres are located nationwide. In direct provision, asylum seekers are provided with accommodation and food, but with little privacy or independence. Asylum seekers receive €19.10 per week per adult, and €9.60 per child to cover essential items such as toiletries and travel.

- **Ethnic Identifier** – a question on a person’s background which can be included on your organisation’s membership form or asked in an interview. It includes information on nationality, ethnicity, place of birth, family background, and native language(s). It is helpful in planning adequately for the particular needs of young people in your group. It is good practice to ask the nationality or ethnic identity of the young person, and of their parent(s)/guardian(s)/primary caregiver(s).

- **Interculturalism** - recognises that ethnic and cultural diversity can enrich our society. This approach implies the development of policies that promote
communication, understanding and integration between different cultures and ethnic groups. In multiculturalism, difference is accepted but not necessarily valued, and there is no acknowledgement of the need to interact with others. Assimilation promotes the absorption of all into the dominant culture, seeing difference as a source of conflict and making minority cultures as invisible as possible.

- **Mainstreaming** – refers to the integration and embedding of a particular issue into all aspects of an organisation’s policy and practice. In the “12 Steps” guide, the issue is interculturalism. Mainstreaming often refers to incorporating needs and issues of a particular into a general service or system, and essentially means an overhaul of how we have been doing things in the past, to include a new perspective in all we do. Mainstreaming interculturalism requires the adoption of an intercultural ‘mindset’ in all we do, and assumes that the goal of all youth work should be the integration of diverse cultural groups, within the organisation itself and in the wider community.

- **Minority Ethnic background** – in the “12 Steps” we refer to engaging with people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The ethnicity in question refers to the background of the young person and not necessarily how they identify themselves. Do not assume someone else’s ethnicity or describe them by your own definition of who they are – simply ask them how they like to be described. Often, people prefer to identify themselves by more complex or mixed ethnicities, for example, Polish-Irish, Irish-Nigerian, Indian-Irish, etc.

- **Networking** – this means building relationships with all stakeholders. This should include community and religious leaders, families and existing networks of minority ethnic groups, as well as schools, religious institutions, community services and other youth work organisations. Look for opportunities to meet communities and parents, and work with other local groups.
• Refugee \(^1\) – a person who has had to leave their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution because of reasons including their ethnicity, religion, nationality, or political opinion. Ireland is a signatory to the “1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees”, which obliges us to provide protection to people fleeing their country for the reasons above. Refugees are entitled to apply for ‘family reunification’ to bring their immediate family members (within certain criteria) to Ireland.

• ‘Separated Child Seeking Asylum’ - previously called ‘unaccompanied minor’, this is a child under 18 years who is seeking asylum in Ireland and is not with his/her parents or guardians. These children are in the care of the HSE and can attend school until completing the Leaving Certificate. They are not entitled to free state education beyond secondary school.

\(^1\) UN official definition: A refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."
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