



YouthAction

NORTHERN IRELAND

Who we are

- Established 1944
- Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation
- Youth Development Agency
- Primarily work with young people 14 – 25 years
- Secular Organisation
- Bases in - L'Derry, Belfast, Augher, Crossmaglen and Armagh
- Practice base with 3,500 per year
- Membership 200 groups
- Target Disadvantage

What we believe in

- **Evidence based practice**
- **Community development**
- **Partnership**
- **Voluntary relationships**
- **Young people led**
- **Innovation**

Youth Work Priorities

- Gender Equality
- Arts Development
- Work with Young Men
- Vocational Training
- Rural Development



Rural Development

Background

- CAP Reform
- Workshops
- Research
- What are the issues?
- What do we mean by rural?

‘Sense of Belonging’

Conclusions

- Social exclusion of young people
- Lack of clarity on concepts
- No infrastructure

New Approach

- Community Youth Development

‘Sense of Belonging’

‘Young people need self-esteem, a sense of belonging to something. They need a role, to be able to make a contribution to their community.’

RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE

- What are the issues?
- What do we mean by ‘rural’?

Defining 'rural'

- Population size
- Communities of choice
- Rural - contribution to region

What is rural?

- At the root of what makes ‘rural’ distinctive to the region, however, and which underpins much of the positive associations listed above, are the natural resources – land, landscape, biodiversity, and so on.
- A Picture of Rural Change 2003 – Rural Development Council

Rural Young People

Policy Context

- Rural young people are not an homogenous group
- They have particular needs around a range of issues
- ‘Sense of Belonging’- ‘policies should reflect the complexity’s of (young) people’s lives and outline in a holistic sense practice and service delivery guidelines’

Youth Service Policy

Background

- Much of the theory and study of youth work is urban in bias e.g. studies of youth culture.
- Some mention in early policies in England
- 1960 The Problems of Youth Work in Rural Areas
- 1970 Milson & Fairbairn
- 1982 Thompson Report
- 1987 Youth Service Policy
- 1997 Model for Effective Practice
- Rural young people are assumed to have the same realities and identical needs as their urban counterparts.

‘We believe the profound differences between youth work in the country and in the town would remain...the sociological aspects of rural life and their effect on the personal development of young people cannot be ignored.’

(cited in Philips and Skinner, 1994)

RURAL YOUTH WORK

A Youth Service for a New Millennium - Youth Service Policy 1999

No specific mention but....

- Cohesive and coherent sector**
- Involvement of Young People**
- Locally based strategies**

Rural Development Policy

- Background
- Current Policy

Rural Development Policy Background

- 1988 The Future of Rural Society
- 1990 Rural Development Programme 1 (LEADER I)
- 1994-1999 Rural Development Strategy (ABSAGS & LEADER II)

RURAL COMMUNITY NETWORK

“The Rural Community Network (RCN) is a voluntary organisation established by community groups from rural areas to articulate the voice of rural communities on issues relating to poverty, disadvantage and equality”.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

“To assist rural Northern Ireland to realise its potential through influencing policy, developing and delivering practical programmes, sharing information and building effective partnerships’

Sub Regional Networks





Rural Development Policy

2000 – 2006

AIM

'To support and encourage people working and living in rural areas to develop initiatives aimed at improving and developing rural communities economically, socially, culturally, and environmentally, for the good of these communities and Northern Ireland as a whole.'

Rural Development Policy

- Some groups in the rural population such as...the young... have been under-represented in the {rural development} process and it is necessary to find new ways of promoting their participation in rural development.
- *(DANI – Preliminary Discussion Paper on RDP 2000-2006)*

RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE

Rural Development Policy

- Rural Development Programme 2000-2006 – identifies young people as key constituency
- Sectoral programme targeting young people
- Rural Community Network 2000-2006 – increase participation of young people in rural community development
- Rural Development Council 2001-2006 - Target under 30 and Rural Baseline Report
- LEADER + Micro Business - prioritises young people as key target group

‘Creating Links’ Aim

To radically increase young people’s participation in the Rural Development Programme to ensure the long term sustainability of rural communities.

ACTION ⇒ OUTCOME

- Engaging young people...
- Engaging rural communities...
- Strategic Development, Networking & Partnership...
- Influencing Policy...
- Dissemination of Learning...

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL OF PRACTICE

- Emerging
- Energising
- Engaging
- Reflection
- Action Planning
- Community Action
- Evaluation
- Exiting
- Dissemination
- Networking

Outcomes

- More effective targeting of services and interventions
- Young people's involvement resulting in more sustainable community development groups and activities
- Creation of structures to enable young people to have a greater influence on Rural Development Policies and Programmes
- Practical materials to enable practitioners to be more effective in responding to rural young people's needs

European Comparative Study

- Documenting good practice
- Networking
- Sharing experiences
- Policy Development

Partners

- Northern Ireland -YouthAction N.I
- Republic of Ireland – KDYS
- Latvia – Southern Latgale NGO
- Sweden - Urkraft

Learning so far.....

- Basis in community development values and principles
- Adequate resources
- Workers skilled in developmental youth work processes
- Adequate timescale
- Effective partnerships
- Regular monitoring and evaluation
- Being flexible
- Being innovative

EVALUATIONS

YOUNG PEOPLE...

- *“I hope the things we talked about carry on & we make an impact on the area in which we live.”*
- *“Community Associations do things for young people and think that’s ok – but they need to ask young people.”*

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES...

- *“Thought provoking...”*
- *“It was so real it was scary...”*