Peace4Youth

Peace
Northern Ireland - Ireland
European Regional Development Fund

youth pact QUALITY & IMPACT

DISTILLING THE ESSENCE OF PEACE4YOUTH PRACTICE

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YouthPact, 2019

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QUALITY & IMPACT

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

The EU PEACE IV funded Peace4Youth Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) uses a youth work approach to address some of the most entrenched insecurities, inequalities and instability in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland, targeting 7600 young people aged 14-24 over a 4 year period (2017-2021) who are disadvantaged, excluded or marginalised, have deep social and emotional needs and are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, violence or dissident activity.

YouthPact, the Quality and Impact Body for the Peace4Youth element of the Programme, works with the funded projects to promote and support a culture of continuous improvement and to provide training and resources that enhance the impact of the work for participating young people. YouthPact is a partnership across four organisations - Cooperation Ireland, Ulster University, POBAL and the National Youth Council for Ireland. This cross-border partnership is supported by SEUPB, the Department for the Economy (NI) and the Department for Children and Youth Affairs (RoI).

The three outcome areas of Peace4Youth are good relations, personal development and citizenship, which will bring about a positive change in the form of clear, meaningful and sustainable 'distance travelled' for those young people who participate.

The overall Peace4Youth programme aims to enhance the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society. It will result in an increase in the percentage of 16-year olds, who socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community; who think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago; and who think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years' time.[1]

Researching Peace4Youth Practice

The purpose of this report is to capture best practice within the Peace4Youth programmes, with a view to highlighting areas of youth work practice worthy of repeating or refining. This work is a qualitative piece of research to understand core elements of practice and experience in the Peace4Youth programme . A Peace4Youth impact evaluation is being carried out by Queen's University Belfast, with quantitative data to illustrate participant distance travelled.

This report draws out learning gained through conducting practice studies with 30 young people and 24 workers during Phase One of the Peace4Youth programme and:

· Makes explicit what is often implicit in the practice of workers and the experience and insight of participants

· Gives voice to meaningful and often shared experiences

· Describes tried and tested youth work approaches

The report reflects on responsive youth work in practice. The practice which has been studied here has been grouped thematically to give insight into what the youth workers see and respond to through their human responses, their programming choices and their group work processes.   They use phronesis and ecological intelligence to determine thoughtful responses to complex situations. Time and time again, young people interviewed were able to identify the ways in which workers noticed their needs and shifted their approach in accordance.

The report is a record of the practice as delivered, experienced and described by workers and young people towards the end of Phase One of the Peace4Youth Programme. This is divided into two parts:

· Part one outlines the concepts and thematic areas which have been delivered within the Peace4Youth programme.

· Part two explores the skills and processes of the workers, in bringing concepts and themes to life for young participants.

The three Peace4Youth programme outcomes are central to the report. Specific sections have been written on Good Relations and Citizenship with Personal Development being understood as a foundational outcome that is present throughout all practice and an enabling factor for the other two outcomes to happen. The three outcome areas are not distinct from each other and have only been separated in the report to shine a light on areas of practice that have been particularly effective.

The report concludes in identifying core elements of Peace4Youth practice, considered worthy of particular attention and focus. For practitioners and managers, the approaches and concepts may be familiar; but with greater refinement, reflection and fine-tuning, the impact for participants can be deepened.

For more information on the Peace4Youth programme visit
www.seupb.eu/piv-children-%26-young-people

For more information on the YouthPact project visit
https://www.cooperationireland.org/youth-pact

For more information on the Impact Evaluation by Queen's University Belfast,
contact Dr. Stephanie Burns on **stephanie.burns@qub.ac.uk**

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[1] These result indicators have been derived from the ARK Northern Ireland Life and Times survey.

RESEARCH PROCESS

Aim

The aim of the research was to identify and articulate aspects of youth work practice which have the greatest impact for young people to develop or change, either personally or have an impact on their life circumstances and their views on society. In addition, the researchers wished to understand, identify and articulate core elements of youth work practice which link to changes for individual young people.

This research began with self-identified transformative moments by individual participants and was followed by an investigation into the journey and interventions which connect to this change.

Target Group

A purposive sample of workers and young people, aged 18-25, were targeted for the research with 24 young people and 30 Peace4Youth Youth Workers taking part. Participants were selected from eight of the ten (now 11) projects. The criteria for participants:

- Aged 18+
- Have been on the programme for four months+
- Preferable if participants are from a range of community backgrounds and different genders
- Preferable if the workers have worked directly with the young people

Environment

Researchers travelled to each of the project sites and requested the following from the project:

1. Access to three quiet spaces/rooms to carry out one to one interviews

2. That a project worker be made available during the interviews as a support for young people if required

3. That a project worker talks through the background information with the young people in advance of the interview

Data Collection

A qualitative approach was used to collect the data. A methodology using a Highways Map[2] was developed for young people from the projects to reflect on their journey, key moments and key actions within the programme, which may have contributed to any self-identified change or movement. These insights from participants were examined in paired interviews with project youth workers.

Each interview took approximately 2 hours across four stages:

1. Researchers explained the process to young people and workers. Consent had been sought prior to this stage and it was explained that participants could withdraw at any stage of the process.

2. Young people worked on their 'Highways' (See Appendix One) exercise with one researcher.

3. Three researchers carried out interviews with young people simultaneously.

4. Three researchers conducted semi-structured paired interviews with two project workers to gain insights into some of the issues from practice which were identified in Highways.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethical approval has been obtained from the Research Ethics Filter committee of the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences in line with Ulster University's research policy.

The ethical issues outlined relate to the care of research participants, informed consent, confidentiality and safeguarding procedures, data protection and privacy as well as the use of data. A research protocol was adopted to ensure ethical issues were consciously considered at each stage of the research.

[2] Highways exercise attached in Appendix One

Pseudonyms were chosen by each young person and are used throughout the report.

Thank you to all the young people who participated.

Participants chose the following pseudonyms:

ANN
BARRY ALLEN
CATRICIA
CHRISTOPHER
DENISE
DIRTY DIANA
DOLORES
ELSA
EL DIABLO
EMILY
GABRIEL JESUS
GARY
JANE
JIMMY CARR
JIMMY
JOHN MCCLARKE
KATIE LEE
KIRSTY
LATOYA
LYNN
NINJA
ONE MILLION STRONG
REECE
ROSE
RICHARD
SKYE
SHANNON
SNOWFLAKE
ULYSSES
50 CENT

AINE
CHRISTINA
CLAIRE
GAVIN
GLENN
JAMES
JAY
JUDE
KEN
KELLY
LAURA
LAUREN
LEANNE
LEIGH
LINDA
LISA
MARK
MICHAELA
MICHELLE
PIARAIS
RAY
RYAN
SEAN
SHAUNA

Workers who took part in the research have been numbered Youth Worker 1, Youth Worker 2, etc for anonymity.

We wish to thank all these workers for their contributions and support.

Thank you to all the Youth Workers who participated.

THE YOUTH WORK APPROACH CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING TO TAKE PLACE

Knowledge and curriculum have historically been the touchstones of the formal education system. The gaining of knowledge has been the central purpose of learning and learning has been viewed as synonymous with knowledge. Aristotelian writings however, remind us that original conceptions of knowledge were more holistic than this gaining and retrieval of facts and information.

Stanton, McMullan and McConville (2018) revisit the ideas of Aristotle, whereby three forms of knowledge are given similar status. For youth workers involved in peace-building, the intersection of these three is fertile ground for reflective practice. Episteme refers to the gaining of information and facts; techne is knowledge derived from practice and is the learning of skills and technique; while phronesis is the learned wisdom that is extrapolated through experience and judgement.

'Phronesis is knowledge needed for action and involves making judgements about what might be the right action to take in a particular context or situation.' (Stanton et al, 2018:42)

Stanton, McMullan and McConville (ibid) present the argument for phronesis as a valuable type of knowledge within youth work and peace-building. Workers in this field develop and use context-specific responses to work in quickly changing scenarios. This requires deliberation and reflection; but also consider their bank of techne and episteme to inform these responses.

Ross et al (2016) similarly distinguish between the different types of knowledge needed by youth workers, responding to and within complex situations. They explain personal knowledge as that which is learning about self – not just that a worker has similar experiences to the young person, but that the worker has 'made meaning of their own personal life story' (ibid, 2016:19). Propositional knowledge is that knowledge of themes and topics, similar to episteme. The combination of these with practice knowledge is what Ross et al (2016, p.20) described as *practitioner expertise*:

Diagram 1: Forms of Knowledge.

Developing Ecological Intelligence

Reading complex situations and circumstances is a skill at the heart of youth work. For Ross et al (ibid), the 'expert' youth worker has a repertoire of responses built up through many years of interactions and use their knowledge to engage across a variety of scenarios. The framework which youth workers use to understand their world is of 'ecological intelligence'. Ross et al (2016) explain it thus:

'The ecology of human development refers to the environments, relationships, and experiences that influence the development of young people and their families.' (2016:20)

Youth workers use reflective practice to tune their observational and listening skills, in order to see and hear not only the words and feelings of the young person, but the sense and meaning they are creating, listening for both expressed needs or felt needs (not necessarily explicitly known or articulated). Davies and Merton (2009:15) describe this process for youth workers:

'They saw themselves as needing to be as responsive as possible, not only to young people's verbalised expectations but also, and perhaps most often, to ones identified by listening, believing, understanding – that is recognising young people's non-verbal messages on what they might need and want from the contact.'

However, ecological intelligence recognises that individuals are part of much wider ecological systems that need to be understood. These begin with understanding the immediate ecology of a young person - of family, friends, home, social pressures; with further deliberations to understand each layer of the ecological system that surrounds them. It is not however enough to know the ecology of the young person without having cognisance of our own world and how our own ecology influences our thoughts, actions and feelings. The understandings are complex and both inward and outward looking:
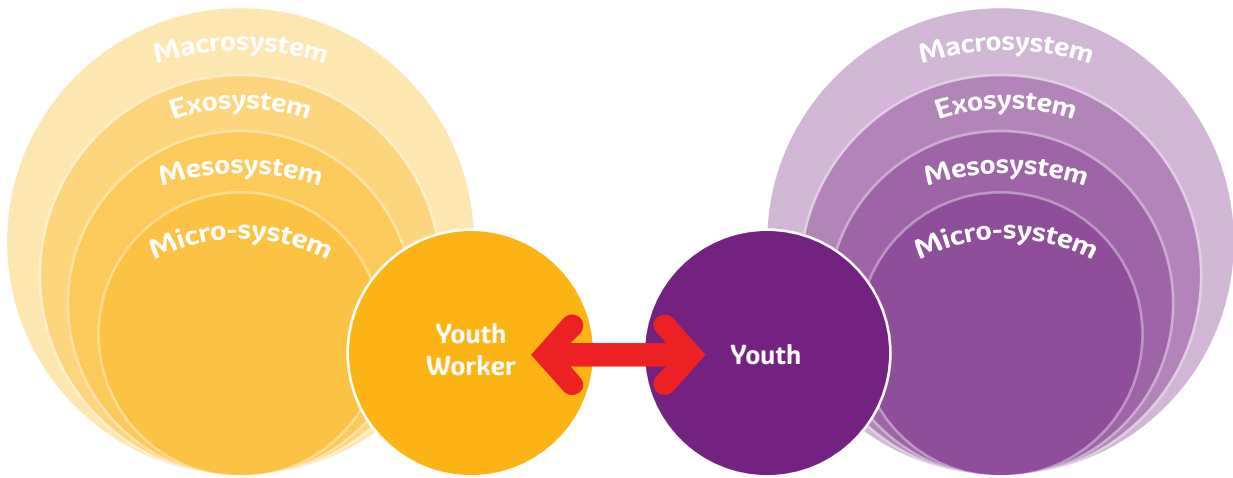

Diagram 2: Youth - Youth Worker Dyad

However, understanding is not of itself action-focused. The task for the worker is in how the information gleaned from these explorations can be organised in such a way as it can offer insights. It is the insight that then leads to the selection of a context-specific response:

'Experts, on the other hand, are able to appraise multiple dimensions of a dilemma (Endsley, 2006). They consider visual and auditory cues, history, and the actions of others in the situation. Their thorough review allows the experts to generate many possible explanations for the problem. They sift through the information and determine which factors are most relevant. Based on their reading of the situation, they are able to formulate possible resolutions.' (2016:20)

The work described by Peace4Youth practitioners is an illustration of the use of ecological intelligence. This presents a framework for the practice, which houses the themes and concepts of the work; and the processes and approaches used to bring the work to life.

CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO GOOD RELATIONS

The five indicators under the core outcome area Good Relations are wide in scope:

- understanding of and respect for diversity;
- an awareness of and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others;
- an understanding of their own identity;
- respect for others from different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations;
- a positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background.

Youth workers have approached good relations using a range of methods, with a common grounding in the thoughts and feelings, attitudes, values, hopes and concerns of youth workers and young people. The practice speaks to the significance of living in a divided society and how we have been shaped by experience, storytelling and relationships.

The willingness to create safe spaces for young people to explore their attitudes and values, has enabled expressions of frustration, ambivalence and hope to emerge in the voices of young people and workers who have taken part in the Peace4Youth programme.

Crucially the approach to good relations is grounded in relationships among young people, and between young people and youth workers. The events, trips and meetings delivered as part of the programme were illuminated by the conversations and reflection in order to bring about what Jean Spence (2008:4) refers to as 'meaning making'.

Opportunities to encounter the other.

Conversation and encounter are core methodologies used by practitioners to enhance understanding and respect for the other. The following process is based on the work of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979) and reflects the youth work process in many cases where youth workers and young people work together to broaden the horizon of their understanding.

The Horizon of Our Understanding

1. *The metaphor that Gadamer uses to describe conversation is that of the horizon. He argues that we each bring prejudices (or pre-judgments) to encounters.*

2. *We have, what he calls, our own 'horizon of understanding'. This is 'the range of vision that includes everything' that can be seen from a particular vantage point'. With these pre-judgments and understandings, we involve ourselves in what is being said.*

3. *In conversation we try to understand a horizon that is not our own, in relation to our own.*

4. *We must put our own prejudices (pre-judgments) and understandings to the test. 'Only by seeking to learn from the 'other', only by fully grasping its claims upon one can it be critically encountered' (Bernstein 1991:4).*

5. *We must open ourselves to the full power of what the 'other' is saying.*

6. *We seek to discover other people's standpoint and horizon. By so doing we understand other views without necessarily having to agree with them.*

(Gadamer, 1979 cited in Smith, 2001)

For the purposes of this paper Good Relations is separated into:

- Others from a different community, culture, ability and orientation;
- Catholic/Republican/Nationalist (CRN) and Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) perspectives.

The rationale behind the two categories is to give due consideration to the distinct characteristics, recognising that there are different dynamics at play in each context.

Others from a different community, culture, ability and orientation

Captured across is a small section of dialogue between the researcher and El Diablo. In the extract El Diablo talks about his attitudes and behaviour towards people from different cultures and backgrounds before and after the programme, demonstrating the impact of the programme on both.

Salmond cited in Cohen (2012) advocates for inter-mingling across ethnicities and identities in which the 'joy of difference' and the 'gift of the other' is emphasised (Cohen, 2012). This can potentially reflect an act of embrace, an exchange of presents or simply attending an event of 'difference'. In short, this represents people emerging from their cocoons to inter-mingle and feel joy, learn about and appreciate each other. Such a 'joy of difference', it can be argued, reassures those who fear cultural dilution. Wilson (2013:9) further notes that,

'An openness to the different 'other' as a gift, is a reality for some but not yet a societal norm'.

Examples of encounter and the joy of difference shared by young people and workers include:

'I don't know. Like my family would be a very mixed family background but, in my head, I always have this idea of 'it's my faith or no faith'. But from going to the Derry or Londonderry trip so people called it and then the trip to Belfast, it helped you understand from the Catholic religion from the Protestant religion as well as from Travellers, non-Travellers and different cultures and stuff. Finding out their benefits of it all, just sort of equalised everything.'
(KATIE LEE, PROJECT B)

'We were learning about the different communities and stuff and the Good Relations. I thought it was really good. Obviously we talked about Protestant and Catholic, Islamic or Muslim and everything. I think it helped, like you know the way Protestants and Catholics are like bickering; I think it helped everyone in our group to understand a bit more and not to fight as much. And, we done a session about other religions and we went on a trip (I can't even remember where we went) but we had five speakers from different communities. There was an American, there was an Irish Traveller, a Muslim and so on (I can't remember them all).'
(1 MILLION STRONG, PROJECT B)

There are many examples in the interviews where young people described the impact of meeting people whom they would not ordinarily have had the chance to meet. Through reflection on these experiences participants and workers describe how growth and change has taken place, and complex ideas such as identity, integration and assimilation have been explored. In the considered interventions of youth workers, visits to places of political and historical interest as well as talks and workshops given by minority or special interest groups have resulted in increased understanding of and respect for diversity; an awareness of and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others and a respect for others from different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations. Growth and change is articulated by Katie Lee and 1 Million Strong:

Catholic/ Republican/Nationalist (CRN) and Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) communities

Morrow (2017:1) states:

'Everything that happened between us, had to be understood from this 'weltanschauung'- this place from which to look at the world. Things that could appear grotesque from somewhere else - including murder, expulsion, lynching, discrimination – made sense in context. If you could not reason to the conflict, the conflict could provide the reasons. What elsewhere might look like madness, could be understood by understanding the narrative. What might be considered criminal if taken in itself, was transformed into something eminently reasonable, probably necessary and even possibly heroic. And even where things went wrong, or individual acts could no longer be justified, the cause, and more specifically the threat posed by them, meant that even these could not take away from the bigger picture.'

Morrow highlights the significance of looking at the context of the ethnic frontier. The name of the place we live in and where the Peace4Youth programme operates is contested. Poet Pádraig Ó Tuama in his collection of poems 'Sorry For Your Troubles' calls it both a dignity and a difficulty to live between the two names of *(the) north (ern) (of) ireland*, in this poem he asks the question:

> Who are we
>
> to be
>
> with one
>
> and other?

(2013:2)

The stories from practice are filled with examples of young people and workers trying to make sense of this question.

There was a degree of ambivalence expressed by workers and young people regarding examining the conflict of 'the troubles' and the continued impact of that conflict. Mc Cully (2004:27, cited in Bell et al, 2010) acknowledges that dialogue in an informal setting, can become embroiled in never–ending *'circular arguments'.* Workers and young people are cautious of engaging in these circular arguments. Young people are conscious of the opportunities afforded through participation in the Peace4Youth programme and are discerning about how they wish to use their time. Harland (2011) argues that, youth workers require skills to support young people to elaborate in an un-leading way and to help young people remove the 'fuzziness' and cyclical debates on conflict and sectarianism. In this way young people can be supported to become co-investigators alongside youth workers in the search for improved understandings. Further, by meeting with young people from other communities they can move beyond circular discussion to more interaction, which provides a new basis of perception and insight. Kinaesthetic models of learning, such as visiting interface divisions and wall murals, can provoke new and additional perspectives which provide a more informed understanding of the conflict.

The interviews are plentiful with practice examples and where young people are co-investigators seeking to better understand the world:

- **Fake news**
- **Fryday News**
- **Visits to political and Historical sites**
- **Campfires with personal story telling**

Reflection and meaning making are central aspects of the practice, enabling young people and youth workers to talk about areas of the work they feel cautious about.

The theme of community relations work generates three core dilemmas for workers and young people, evident across research interviews:

- The ethics of labelling (or asking young people to label themselves) young people into traditional CNR or PUL communities. Workers in particular talked of the difficulties in asking young people to self-identify.
- Continuing to talk about the past and putting the responsibility of previous generation's conflict onto this generation.
- Calling into question the reasons why there is a continued need to talk about conflict as a priority in the context of other concerns for young people including matters of health, inclusion, the future etc.

'I understand why we have been looking at it but because there are different ones in our group there's some Protestant, some Catholic. So like it's good to learn about other sides – but one question I always ask them like 'ask the group' and I don't think that anybody has been able to answer me yet is like why does it matter? Why does it matter about the differences, like why do people make such a big deal about the differences, 'can't we all just get along?' kinda thing. And nobody has been able to answer that'
(SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A)

Snowflake continues,
'Like the worse fact is more to do with the older generation expecting it to get worse or expecting it to go the other way like the way it used to be and then maybe even causing it not even due to knowledge but maybe by accident or something. Like that can always happen, like it can go back I wouldn't want it to go back – like the way it is so far the way it has been going and the way it has been getting better like I hope in a couple of years them peace walls get torn down and stop the separation.'
(SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A)

'I don't like it I think it's just the way we are. See the way we all get on as a group I don't feel like we need to keep bringing stuff up, because we don't come in here as Catholics or Protestants and then people throw it up and bring things in and I think that's what keeps things still going'
**(ELSA, PROJECT E)**

'I think with my good relations hat on. I know we are planning more contact and deeper meaningful contact but actually one thing that has particularly resonated with me is the young people around this area where we are working, have limited engagement with difference. Their contact with anybody outside of their own [geographical] area is non-existent, it's non-existent. So, the opportunities that we are able to give them, and we will plan to give even further, are really vital. You know maybe the groups in the [name of organisation] they mix them up with different people but this is such an isolated area in so many ways and I think it's so important that these opportunities are there for them.'
(YOUTH WORKER 21, PROJECT G)

'Well I've written here that everything I've done has been thanks to Project A and the opportunities they have provided; so many new doors to open and explore and to find out about different cultures because like we have been finding out about Islamic places we have even been finding out the difference between Catholics and Protestants – you wouldn't believe how many differences there is - stupid differences too.'
(SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A).

This narrative is not unusual. Wilson (2013:63) warns about the propensity to limit the level or intensity of encounter with the other:

'People can share the same space, but these same spaces can be hostage to a wider dynamic of preferring 'separation' and silence, 'avoidance' where people are in the vicinity of one another or 'politeness' where people have to share the same space. In such a climate the space for meeting the other in depth is narrowed and so the space for mutual understanding work is small.'
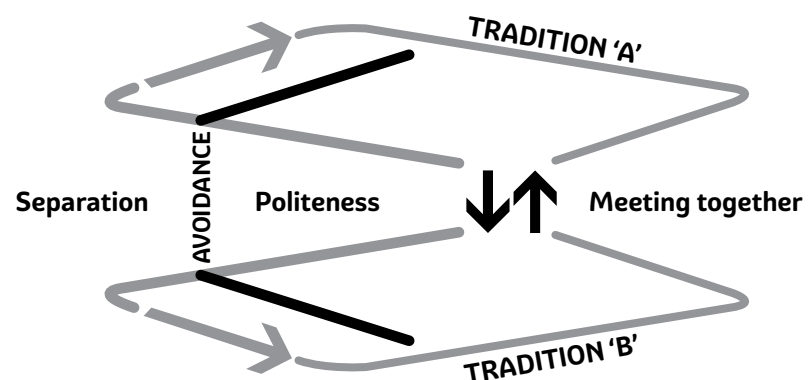
The Dynamics of Separation, Avoidance and Politeness

Diagram 3: Separation, Avoidance or Meeting Together?

In light of this dynamic, Wilson proposes two broad 'restorative learning tasks'.

One is to assist people to understand the present-day dynamics that continue to feed mutual antagonism and, in some cases, fear in daily life.

The second is to practically learn to dissolve their power through the promotion of more open relationships and structures.
(2010: 8)

Youth workers and young people in the Peace4Youth programme have faced some of these challenges and highlight two key reasons for continued Good Relations work: firstly there remains a need and secondly the work brings about change, as highlighted by Youth Worker 21,Project G and Snowflake, Project A).

Contemporary approaches to good relations

Research interviews revealed that good relations work with a narrow focus only on Catholic or Protestant communities and with an over-emphasis on history had limited appeal for participants. Where good relations learning was more in tune with the lives of participants, issues of identity, segregation, separation, conflict and hate could be more easily addressed. Where this work is framed in contemporary contexts, young people can see a greater relevance of the work and can embrace the ideas more seamlessly. The core elements of this contemporary approach include:

· Use of everyday moments, themes or discussions as a way into discussions of good relations and community relations.

· Space to share everyday life that has 'difference' at the centre and a willingness to express difference at a personal level as children and young people.

· Encounter with the other that facilitates asking questions to deepen understanding

· Listening and sharing in informal and more formal spaces.

· Reflection on experience to identify change in a positive manner rather than with a reprimanding tone.

Many of these approaches have been developed and refined over years of good relations and community relations work, however, these need to be re-invented and re-framed as we move further away from the Good Friday Agreement (1998) and deeper into peace. Young participants from the Peace4Youth programme need time to make the connections between their own lives and the legacy of conflict. Practitioners must use inventiveness in keeping good relations work relevant and use initiative to exploit naturally-occurring moments as a learning opportunity.
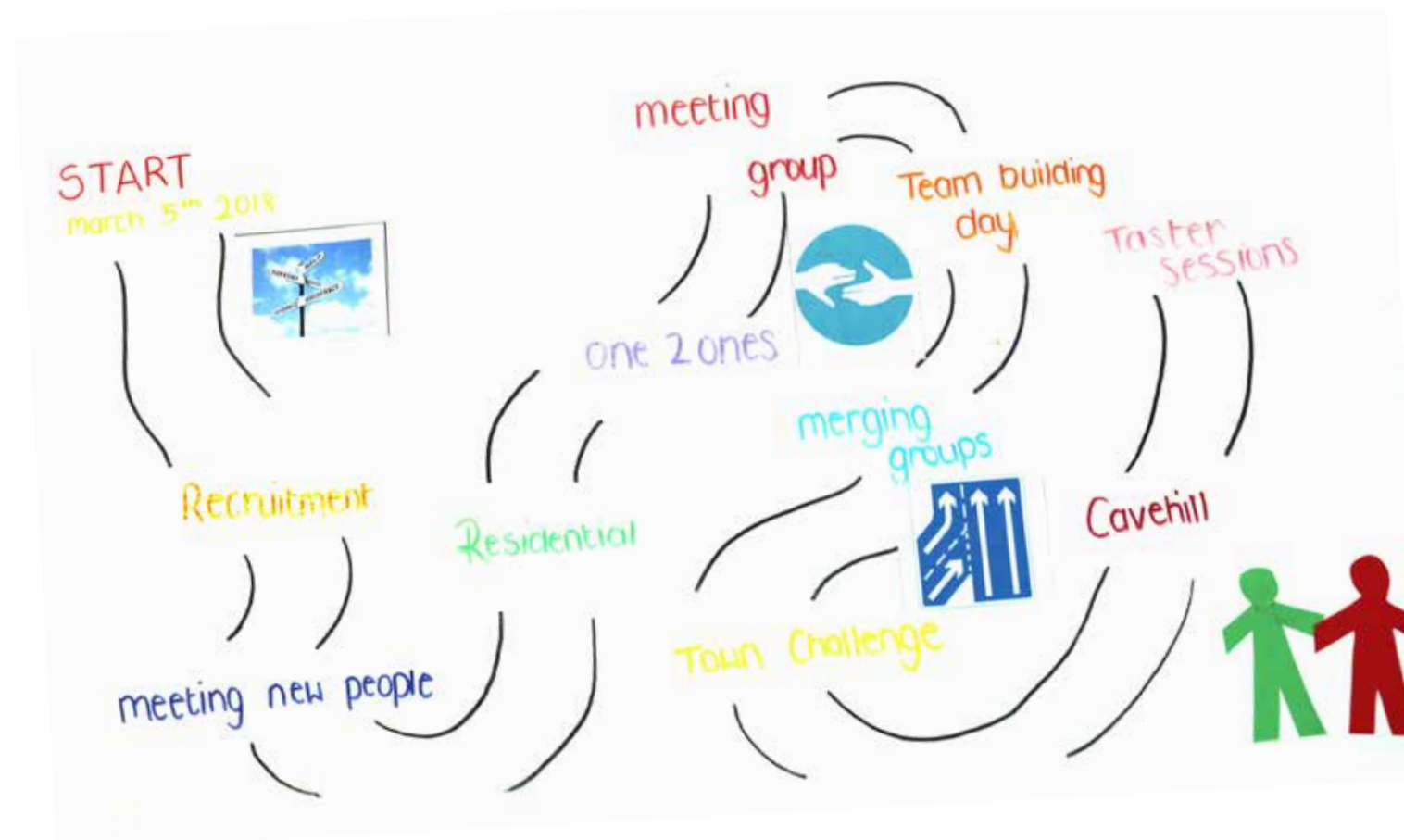
CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship has four defined outcome indicators in the Peace4Youth programme:

· Engagement with useful services;

· Positive participation in community structures, initiatives and democratic processes;

· Volunteering in communities of place and/or interest;

· Positive family and community relations.

In appearance citizenship can seem to be the least prominent outcome area in the programme however in breaking it down into distinct elements, the strengths of citizenship work are evident.

Young people often experience a lack of control in many of the decisions that affect their lives. The Peace4Youth programme across all outcome areas works to support young people to develop their consciousness, skills and confidence to make their own decisions and to participate in decision making processes.

Young people's experience of a lack of control over their own decision-making, coupled with the context in Northern Ireland of contested decision-making, can paint a pessimistic picture of the opportunities for citizenship outcomes; and yet the practice presents many examples where there is reason for optimism; examples where growth and change are taking place and where an increased connection with personal agency, family and communities is taking place. (Personal agency is explicitly identified as a personal development outcome indicator, but manifests as a cross-cutting area).

In these stories from practice citizenship is presented through the lens of values, principles and actions.

Starting Points

The programme sets out to target young people who are most marginalised, and the Delivery Partners have ensured this has happened, with each cohort of young people representing rich and varied communities, interests and abilities. Workers described what they learnt about the young people's starting points during the programme. A person-centred approach was evident, and workers and young people persisted to get them to a point where a more trusting relationship was established.

'It took me about 3 weeks to get one young person to fill in their sign in form because he wouldn't - 'why do you want my address? why do you want these details?'. Like for other people that was no problem but for some young people it was why why why and it was just like so oh my God there are major trust issues - so you have workers in, doing a bit, leaving, doing a bit, leaving and the feeling that 'why should we do this for you because you're just gonna leave'...... you can hit the ground running with some groups but with other groups it is a struggle. The content has been pushed to the end, because of the issues you were dealing with.'
(YOUTH WORKER 20, PROJECT G)

Staunton et al (2018:46) states,

'It (phronesis) emerges as a form of knowledge that draws heavily from lived experience. Using multiple forms of knowing which demonstrate an integration of both subjective and objective experience, phronesis draws on explicit but also tacitly held pattern recognition of context to guide action for the 'particular'.'

Throughout the interviews workers described how they recognise and celebrate the growth, learning and achievement of young people using a range of methods that range from formal learning such as the achievement of an accredited course to the celebration of a young person being able to speak for themselves. Workers recognise the pathways to change and the steps being created in the programme to enable young people to move forward.

A Rights Perspective on status and belonging

Wood (2010) presents a concept of citizenship that combines three inter-related concepts:

· The **status** of citizenship

· The **rights** of citizenship and

· The **responsibilities** of citizenship

Status and rights are housed in international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child[3]. Article 12 of the UNCRC states that children and young people have the human right to have opinions and for these opinions to matter. It further states that the opinions of children and young people should be considered when people make decisions about things that involve them, and they shouldn't be dismissed out of hand on the grounds of age. It requires that children and young people should be given the information they need to make good decisions. However, the right alone does not provide the whole context in which citizenship work is happening in the Peace4Youth programme.

The 'responsibilities' of citizenship is often given greatest priority by youth workers wishing young people to take their part and to 'give back' to society. Increasingly 'active' has been added to citizenship and consequently young people demonstrate that activity through volunteering, engagement with public services and democratic participation (Andrews et al., 2008; Crick, 2000 cited in Woods, 2010: 194). There is nothing wrong with the activity but as is evident in the stories from practice, citizenship is most often expressed and understood as an activity which creates a greater sense of belonging, feeling valued, being seen and recognised, and capable of contributing.

Context can be everything. And in the context of Northern Ireland and the Border Counties in the Republic of Ireland, citizenship is often tied to nationality. Workers reported ambivalence from young people in engaging in discussions that lead to and exposed a sense of 'them and us'. Young people from Northern Ireland interviewed, described how they navigate the complexities of a divided society in their everyday life. Examples included being the child of a 'mixed relationship' and having a child through a 'mixed relationship' their everyday relationships are characterised by dealing with complexity not avoiding it.

Recognising status and place as elements of citizenship can be problematic where being one thing or another; belonging to one group or another; carries a legacy of 'them and us'.

Morrow (2017:2) highlights the friend/foe dynamic that is typical of the complexities that participants and workers in the Peace4Youth programme are immersed in as part of everyday life. He states,

'Politics, even if it is mediated by the ritual of elections, is not about choosing an executive and legislature but a battle for control of the resources and identity of state between mortal enemies. Eventually, accommodating a corruption scandal or saving the health service has to be subordinated to the primary issue. What makes these places intractable is that security, respite from threat, is never achieved by physical distance. 'we' can never be rid of 'them.' And trying to get rid of them reinforces the friend/foe dynamic. The other is not only enemy but permanently present.'

[3] The UNCRC defines the child as a person under 18 years of age.

'The whole Catholic/Protestant/ sectarian divide was very low on their priority of what they wanted to explore. And just as we were talking about it there I was going do you know I don't think our group now eight months later could actually pinpoint who's a Catholic or Protestant, only from their community background. But we have young people who've grew up in the care system and have lived in every corner of Belfast. We have young people who are from Romania who don't identify as either. You know we're promoting that diversity and working on the youth- led approach. It's not as relevant to this age group anymore is what we're finding.'
(YOUTH WORKER 1, PROJECT A)

'As time went on I was getting more confident and then we did a summer scheme and that's where my confidence really built up. With working with the children, you weren't allowed to be shy. So, we done that for 2 weeks and I think that's why I built it up really'.
(CATRICIA, PROJECT I)

'The things that we were initially doing and because we are youth-led, we met with the Experts by Experience[4] (EBEs) and carried out exercises around personal development, community relations and citizenship. From that, they were telling us what they thought. What was important in this area and the key thing coming out in this area? Then, we would discuss with the different groups. I know the one that really worked was the citizenship one. It is just the way, it was falling around Saint Patrick's Day and Easter time. We discussed about the citizenship and how could they could give back to the community. What would you give back? One group has decided to run a 'family group fun day', which was a huge success. They have done everything from going knocking on people's doors looking for donations like the local take-away, the court-house. They have done it in maybe only two weeks.'
(YOUTH WORKER 15, PROJECT F)

[4] Experts by Experience are those with lived experience of a specific issue or theme, who wish their insights to be used and useful for others.

The interplay between feeling like you belong somewhere, being confident enough to contribute and courageous enough to shape your society are all worked out in the day to day process of the Peace4Youth programmes. The overall programme design creates space for change that enhances the capacity of young people to be informed on issues that are important to them and to have the confidence to articulate the messages they want to give. The Peace4Youth Programme is growing young peoples confidence and status greater understanding of rights and opportunities to exercise responsibility

Preparing young people for participation

In Max-Neef's model of fundamental human needs, (1991), participation is named as one of nine interdependent needs, and unlike Maslow's hierarchy of needs promote a more democratic *(as opposed to hierarchical)* relationship between needs. Sapin (2013:147) states '***If young people's needs for participation are not satisfied, the effects can interfere with other aspects of their lives. For example, if young people are disempowered or alienated, the sense of belonging and self-esteem that comes with identity can be adversely affected.'***

Diagram 4 – Max-Neefs fundamental human needs model

Workers and young people reported examples where young people had varying degrees of responsibility for initiating, designing and planning elements of the programme. The skills gained in these tasks are instrumental in young people organising on behalf of others as well as providing skills and opportunities to connect with services that may be helpful.

Young people are preparing for the future in meaningful ways that are important and relevant to their present.

Voice

Young people and workers throughout the interviews shared examples of how they increased their voice, had more confidence in speaking for themselves and were able to speak to others, sharing their experiences, opinions and ideas. There are many examples of young people speaking up for themselves and for others as well as workers advocating for young people. Examples are presented in this simple framework:

· Worker Advocacy

· Peer Advocacy

· Self-Advocacy

Examples from Practice

Worker Advocacy	Peer Advocacy	Self-Advocacy
Promoting positive attitudes within and outside the group	Organising visits to places where services are available for young people	Speaking at launches and events (sharing some of a personal impact story)
Attending appointments with young people	Planning and delivering community events	Increased confidence to apply for a job and engage with prospective employers
Addressing barriers to participation for example childcare	Awareness raising of issues that are important to individual young people, the group, and/or family members	Communicating more freely with family members – expressing feelings and needs
Building relationships with family members		

Positive interaction with family members often came about as a result of young people's successes or milestones through the programme. One young person, describing their experience of speaking at a launch event stated:

'I have done things like that before, but it was in a school situation. But this one, I was actually proud myself and I actually built my confidence, I actually got up and spoke. And my mum was even so proud of me she even had a big smile on her face and Youth Worker 24 was so proud of me, he said look how far you have gone by yourself.'
(NINJA, PROJECT H)

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'I cannot put them back into the shell - I think that's for him his confidence has been knocked back something shocking in primary school or in a group, no confidence in a group. That's why the one to one was important. With him his confidence grew and grew through journeying with him and having that relentless youth work approach. Saying ok I'm not just gonna let you go I'm going to find out why you went and I'm going to find out from others what I can do to help. And even on the second residential he took part in water activities the activities that he never would have done. On the third residential he slept in a hammock which he never would have done. And he has here (referring to the highways map) 'From being helped I turned into the person who is helping people - people started listening to my ideas'. And he was helping them take steps on their journey and that is him down to a T - People giving him advice and people were listening to him. It was no longer wee [Paddy] it was [Paddy], a person.'
(YOUTH WORKER 24, PROJECT H)

'A lot of people in the hostel would come to me because I'm trying to get involved in working with the project, so they come to me. But it's nice, it's nice to be able to help other people as well.'
(DIRTY DIANA, PROJECT G)

'So, they ran like our 'day on' was on mental health and they went into schools and youth clubs and were the facilitators around how to keep your mental health well, what they do using sports, using their own life stories and inspirations.'
(YOUTH WORKER 1, PROJECT A)

'We talked about the Civil Rights Movement and about Martin Luther King and how black people in America were being oppressed. We talked about Rosa Parks and the bus protests. My co-worker did a class session around it. For me, it was very empowering. It was all about how one small thing could make a massive impression on the world. And how one powerful image can change the world view. Then we created discussions around how am I oppressed and who is oppressing me, and, in our area, there is a big paramilitary hold and then we started to talk about how the kids speak out against that in the community. And then there was the whole thing about fear of speaking out against them in the community. And I think knowing what oppression is and how you challenge it is the big thing. It doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to do it but knowing and understanding it they are the key things for me.'
(YOUTH WORKER 24, PROJECT H)

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Three young people from the same project described a process whereby one young man was referred to as 'wee Paddy' [Name Changed]. Through the programme the young person began to refer to himself as Paddy, the others in the group began to drop the 'wee'. The young people noticed a change in how Paddy viewed himself and their capacity to change how he was viewed by and referred to by others. There was an appreciation of personal growth and change as well as his peers experiencing their capacity to support and respect these changes.

Making a Contribution

Peter McVerry at The Essence of Youth Work Conference (Ulster University, 2018) talked of how young people feel the need to be needed. Peter spoke of the importance of creating opportunities for young people to feel valued as individuals with a contribution to make to others. The dignity of being able to contribute to others is part of the transformative experiences for young people. Where young people could directly see how their contribution lead to benefit for individuals or the community, there is an awakening of what they are capable of and how they can impact the world around them.

During the interviews young people reported their experiences of helping other young people, their community and making more positive contributions to their family. This is not surprising as workers articulated an intrinsic value of regarding young people as an asset to society, a core value of the youth work profession:

The complexity of citizenship emerges from the Peace4Youth practice; with the work spanning from anti-racist work to leadership development; from advocacy to lobbying; and much in between. The breadth of the citizenship work and programming is a result of two related themes – that of co-design, (whereby young people co-develop their own programme) and building a purposeful programme (whereby careful activities and exercises are constructed to build towards citizenship outcomes). Programme design and content through the Peace4Youth programme is explored to understand the intervention logic which has greatest impact.

BUILDING A PURPOSEFUL PROGRAMME

In the design of the Peace4Youth programme, each project was asked to outline their theory of change; the sets of assumptions and logic which can lead to the intended outcomes for participants and the programme outcomes. The intention here is to focus on the end-game in order to give clearer purpose to the methodologies that lead to the programme outcomes. The methodology is the purposeful youth work programme, which distinguishes between the elements of a purely diversionary programme and an educational one:

'For youth work driven by an educational purpose, rather than diversionary agenda, the programme must capture the imagination of young people while leaving substantive space for informal education and the fostering of opportunities for democratic engagement. Programmes are a tool, they are a primary way in which the substance of youth work is laid out, but it is not the content. That resides in the dialogue and conversations occurring within and around the programme units.'
(Gilchrist, 2010: 77)

The Peace4Youth programme plays host to hundreds of different activities and events; from abseiling to reading rooms; from mountain climbing to motivational speakers. The scale and breadth of the youth work activities are not of themselves significant; but their wide reach, appealing to different tastes is important for initial engagement with young people.

Lynn describes the activities she loved and others she hates:

Here Lynn alludes to the role of peer support in this gym experience, whereby group activity substantially altered this experience for her. This chimes with Gilchrist (2010:70), who reminds us that eye-catching programming alone will have limited impact if the programme activities are not driven towards building relationships:

'*For it is the programme that initially draws many young people into contact with the worker, and frequently it will be the quality of the programme that determines how long such contact is sustained. Good programmes help sustain relationships, while poor ones lead to their disconnection.'*

Robertson (2005, cited in Gilchrist, 2010:75) further reminds us of an intangible yet vital element of youth clubs – that clubs and projects are 'where things happen'; and with this concept there is a level of anticipation and excitement of what might come:

At its most primal, there is a deep-rooted attraction by young people to activity – perhaps this begins for some to occupy the self and kill boredom; but in time these motivations change, with a greater openness for self-reflection and introspection.

SHARE THE ROAD

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'Yesterday and last Tuesday we have been at [name of gym] and I've loved it. Like I've never been to a gym or into a gym because I would be too self-conscious but being with a group you feel like you have people there, so they are not going to look at you, d'ya know what I mean so I've really enjoyed that. We've done filmmaking and music too, but I don't really like that. No, it doesn't appeal to me...... Yeah and even the program with the fitness one is really appealing.'
(LYNN, PROJECT E)

'A day at Project F is never the same, it is unexpected to what is going to happen next.
(KIRSTY, PROJECT F)

'.... The water was cold it was crazy. Youth Worker 24 was like, 'go on - give it a go, you'll like it.' And I was like 'no it's cold'. We had to swim to the end of the wall and it was cold, and I was 'aaahhhh'. And then we had to crawl along on our hands and knees and to see who could get the farthest without stopping .... and then we are doing a back walk and we were walking towards the sea and they were all 'it's ok you're still on the sand'. And we didn't realise that we were in the water. And I was saying 'it's not that far' and we were going out further and further ....no I would've had my eyes closed. I didn't think I was out that far; and then I was.'
(NINJA, PROJECT H)

....

'I was actually just supporting the youth workers doing their pathway plans and the issue of anger management came up a lot, so actually let's take bits out of the conflict management and look at what your triggers are and how you respond and those things. So the flexibility of 'ok yes, this is what we are covering and what we are looking at, and there is space to go deeper into some of the issues too'.
(YOUTH WORKER 21, PROJECT G)

'Or maybe we need to go further into that so that flexibility of doing, either doing additional qualifications or having additional sessions to look at things beyond that has been quite good.'
(YOUTH WORKER 22, PROJECT G)

Young (2006:65) illustrates where the youth work journey can lead:

'Initially, young people may be attracted by the opportunity to take part in activities. They may decide to go along with things to see what they can get out of it for themselves, grasping the chance for a free weekend away or involvement in activities like 'canoeing, camping or whatever'. Pretty soon, however, they realise that there is more to this youth work than they first thought. They acquire and develop new skills and abilities. They look inside themselves and ask, 'what am I doing here?' and 'where do I want to progress to in my life?'

Harnessing potential using activities

Like many aspects of youth work, programming is an iterative process. Similar to erecting scaffolding, programmes are built step-by-step; but feedback and reflection are at the heart of the process to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of each step. The iterative process is the continuous process of self-evaluation whereby the programme is dynamic and changes according to need and context.

This is true of specific activities which are designed and adapted in real-time, to maximise a transformative moment. This is particularly true of activities where there is risk attached; and where participants are asked to face their own fears. Workers will devise activities to purposefully learn to live within anxiety-evoking situations; but within this, they assess the possibility that young people may not face their fears and adapt the activity towards this possible outcome.

Ninja, from Project H, describes the water sport activities he took part in. The young people were becoming anxious and their fear of the cold was becoming more paralyzing. The youth workers worked through this phase, with a step-by-step approach, balancing competitive edge with a cajoling supportive one, to immerse the group fully into the activity:

Walking in the sea water for some was a new experience. However, it is not the 'new-ness' of an activity that is the defining educational features. Newness is a valued feature of the activity only where *'the newness elucidates potential for learning and furthermore where the worker embraces and embellishes the newness.'* (Harte, 2005: 90). The worker is the key to hosting potential learning opportunities for young people, using this iterative approach. The role of the youth worker here is to reveal the learning challenge housed inside the activity and to mould the activity for deeper and wider effect.

Youth Worker 21 and Youth Worker 22 describe the programming process thus:

Dirty Diana from Project G is also clear that the curriculum or the programme is not the central catalyst for change in his programme:

Harte (2005, p.87) echoes this sentiment, proposing that it is '**t*he worker's role to enable participants to harness this potential, to secure opportunities to learn, change and grow***' and he points to the evaluative and de-briefing process as the gateway that can lead to these pathways.

Drawing out meaning from experience

'*The key to learning through experience lies not only in the quality of experience which is to be had, but in the ability to reflect upon, deconstruct, internalise and use the experience to promote growth. In short, the evaluation of the experience is, in the youth work context, often the most significant contribution towards the learning of all the parties'.* (Harte, 2005:93)

Consistently, Peace4Youth workers describe devices they use to extract and sharpen the learning. There is an inherent understanding that experience without reflection has short-lived rewards. For many young participants, they create meaning from developing a questioning culture, which encourages them to interrogate their own worlds and their place in the world. The concept of interrogating is crucial in building a more complex analysis of everyday life; and the practice of questioning is introduced to young people in non-threatening ways such as a drawing exercise; or a book or a thought sheet:

Questioning can be an uncomfortable, anxiety-evoking process and can raise issues for us that we might rather have hidden. However, when the purpose of such seemingly benign activities is in raising consciousness of self, workers are not deterred by the demanding process:

'It's not the course it's the workers who make you feel you've got a friend that you can talk to if you need to and if you need help with your work they're always going to be there.'
(**DIRTY DIANA FROM PROJECT G**)

....

'I have a community awareness programme. We just have a wee sheet and I do up, the top of it is a cork board with different letters and it is just a thought sheet - We get them to think about 'what does community mean to you? what does your community mean? what is community?' 'So, what is a community?' - the thought process; even the thinking about community was alien.'
(**YOUTH WORKER 19, PROJECT F**)

'I wish I had of brought it in - at the end of the course I called it my motivation book - we all wrote inspiring things and positive things and things that you would have really felt about each person in their own book.'
(**JIMMY CARR, PROJECT H**)

....

'We didn't do the exact same format as life shields, but we did make the journey, the river of life. And got them to kind of identify their journey before coming here but mainly on their group experience so far and where they're off to next. And then that allowed some who weren't comfortable at that stage to open up a little bit more.'
(**YOUTH WORKER 1, PROJECT A**)

'And then they're also getting the opportunity to tell their story on camera, which some of them thought was a bit therapeutic. Others struggled with it. Didn't really want to tell the story. Didn't want to go too deep. But there was that opportunity there.'
(**YOUTH WORKER 8, PROJECT C**)

'The theoretical base is there and we're going to get to it all eventually but it's making sure that you do it when the moment is right. Instead of trying to push that they must understand Irish history for the next section of the curriculum so (we can say) we've done that…. (On the)8th of March, we did something about unsung women in Irish history, for International Women's Day and I had 40 odd cards of women in Irish history.'
(YOUTH WORKER 11, PROJECT D)

'We were very very conscious of what movies we were suggesting that they watched when we were having a movie night. So, trying to lead them down to different things. One of the things we did get them to watch was 'The Greatest Showman'. And we were talking – 'aw what did you think about that?' So wee ways that they didn't realise we were doing it. But the first thing that stood out to them was the racism, like that's terrible. You know and that actually happened. We were able to then draw that back the next day and kind of say 'well this kind of is similar to what's happening in Northern Ireland'. 'Really? Was it?'
(YOUTH WORKER 23, PROJECT H)

'I thought the Brexit information day, that had a huge impact on my young people as well. It got them thinking about the effects it will have on us crossing up to the North. Even for education. Different bits and pieces like that for themselves if they decided to move or if they're purchasing a car. That was a huge thing because they all want to get on the road you know.'
(YOUTH WORKER 22, PROJECT H)

'So, going into the other area in the city was really challenging. Some people were really nervous saying like I have never been here before. We are talking about people who live in [names CRN area] of the city. Some of the ones that are living there and I've just to go inside [PUL area] and be in there and we were playing games. It was just an initial step and it was part of the feedback that we would like to do more and have more engagement.
(YOUTH WORKER 25, PROJECT I)

Where norms are no longer

Questioning is a powerful device. Within education, we can teach within the set of societal norms; or we work to question and challenge these. For programming purposes, Harte (2005: 88) suggests that activities have the capacity to reinforce and strengthen the inequal and unfair norms of our society unless workers take a deliberate 'oppositional stance'. Taking such an 'oppositional stance' is a core position for the Peace4Youth workers, whose role is to stand beside the voiceless. For peace and good relations programmes, this is about purposely setting up activities that present oppositional viewpoints. For Youth Worker 11, this was about the role of women in Irish history; and for Youth Worker 23, this was a moment where a film shines a spotlight on racism:

Where the skill of the youth worker is most evident is in differentiating tone from content. For the experienced worker, setting up content that is challenging is much more powerful than using a challenging tone with young people. Material that generates reflection and soul-searching can hit a chord with young people – and it is this salience to their own lives that makes the material so memorable for individual participants:

There are opportunities to begin where young people begin, but this ***oppositional stance*** in programming uses activities as a springboard to new dimensions. The film becomes an opportunity to think about racism and diversity at home; so, its value is not undermined but deepened. Stereotypes can be challenged; and accepted societal norms can be given a robust nudge to see how true or real they might be under scrutiny.

Engaging programmes that respond to needs

For workers, the act of planning programmes and activities is a fine art. There is a careful negotiation of starting points. All programming is to be derived from an understanding of individual and group needs. Bradshaw's taxonomy of need (1972), (cited in NYCI, 2013) presents a framework for workers to develop different perspectives on needs. Expressed needs relates to those needs that are literally expressed; while felt needs may be based on what the individual or group perceives or feels without necessarily having expressed this. Emergent needs are particularly relevant for long programmes such as the Peace4Youth projects, as needs are bound to change at each stage of the process.

Youth Worker 4, Project B notices and works with the different issues and interests with each group and they manoeuvre to respond to these themes:

For Jimmy Carr of Project H, the workers had to make judgements to adapt to individual needs and styles:

But where programmes are too instrumental or too linear, they can lack imagination or the element of the unknown. Programmes that divine curiosity amongst the participants are key to building the passion and loyalty of the young person. For Rose, Project C the activity was a clear draw; described as 'mind-blowing':

Imaginative and exciting activities do not need to be complex or expensive ones; but workers who use their creativity and propensity to fun can generate excitement in simple ideas:

Here, the skilled worker understands the difference between activities that are childish (which may be patronising for participants) and those, like this, that are child-like (with opportunities for abandonment and temporarily shedding the issues of youth).

'The current cohort, a lot of them would be…. they want to chat about sex, which is okay for young people, that's what they want to chat about. Keeping themselves safe and whatnot; the cohort before that was mental health, which would have been a big issue.'
**(YOUTH WORKER 4 PROJECT B)**

'But that's the thing with every course, people don't always accept change straight away and people take it at their own speeds. What leads on to the next one; people go down the road at their own speeds and you've got to learn that just because you know where you are going, it doesn't mean you have to force yourself and tell other people where they want to go. Let them discover it for themselves.'
(JIMMY CARR OF PROJECT H)

'So, I was like oh yay. So, I'm reading stories and purposely… I'm not doing English but I'm purposely looking for the meaning behind these that relate to us personally in who we are and how human behaviour works. And so, I really enjoyed the reading rooms which we did every week.'
(KIRSTY, PROJECT F)

'We played hide and seek in the dark with the whole house'.
(JOHN MCCLARKE, PROJECT H)

'So, it is that deliberate part of practice which is always just appropriate to the needs of the people and not adjusted to the program. And looking for where is the next need that is… for example, the drama triangle- victim, persecutor, rescuer; or whether it's transactional analysis; whether they want to do something physical 'let's do something physical'. 'Okay, let's do some hula hoops' and when we do hula hoops there is transactional analysis there by putting parent/ adult/child state and standing at different positions and taking that position.'
(YOUTH WORKER 11, PROJECT D)

Activities can be meeting individual or group needs, whilst simultaneously being challenging or difficult for the young person. While it makes sense to assume that such activities could deter young people from the programme, nevertheless participants are willing to face these difficult discussions or situations. High levels of trust between participant and worker may be at play here; or there may be growing evidence for the individual of benefits from facing difficult challenges. Ultimately, the key is for workers to seek learning and growth opportunities in all activity, and pursue these towards and beyond the tipping point for the young people:
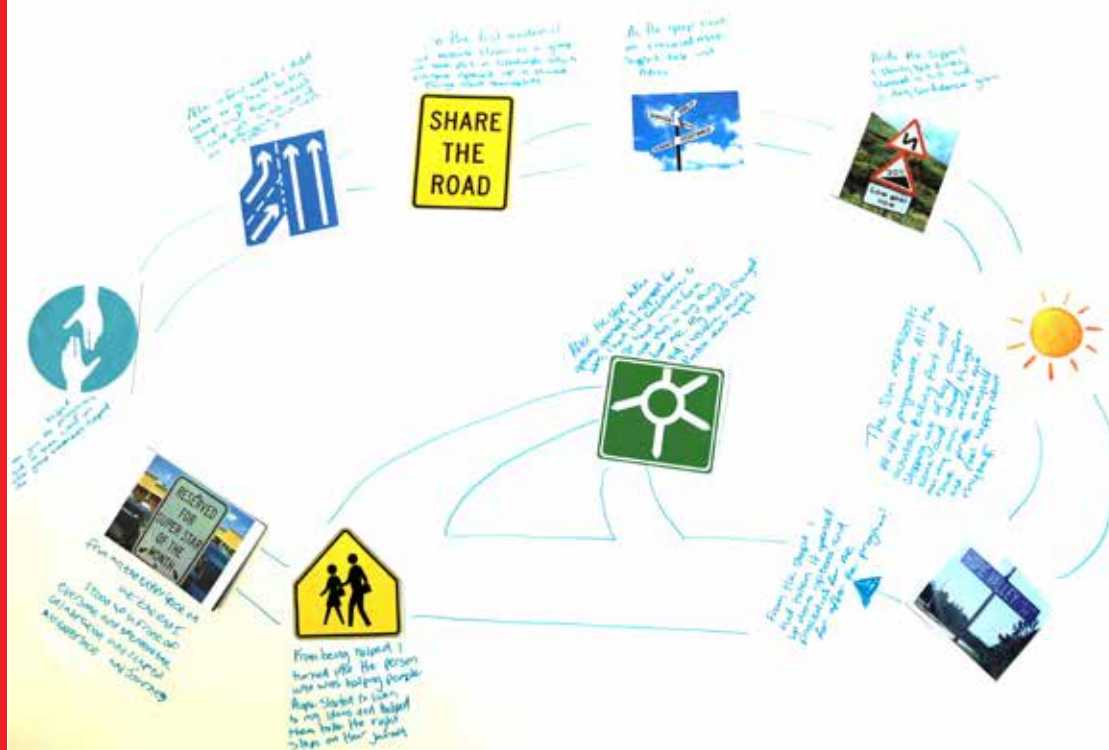
CO-DESIGN & YOUTH-LED PRACTICES

The policy, practice and language of co-design[5] has become the new mantra for solving a series of contemporary issues of the social world (Blomkamp, 2018). Blomkamp presents a definition of co-design which resonates more with policy-development than programme design, but nonetheless offers a perspective on the process:

'An appropriate definition of co-design as a methodology for policy-making would recognise it as a design-led process, involving creative and participatory principles and tools to engage different kinds of people and knowledge in public problem-solving. Co-design for policy has three key components - process, principles and practical tools.' (ibid, 2018:731)

The benefits of co-design in terms of policy development are questioned and questionable (Blomkamp, 2019) however the social benefits are more confidently stated through case study research:

'Co-design, it has been suggested, 'creates a feeling of involvement and ownership' (Bradwell and Marr 2008, 15) by generating 'a shared understanding and shared language between participants and designers' and by supporting 'a sense of immersion, dialogue and empathy for the perspective of those who will use and experience the design' (Hagen and Rowland 2011).' (cited in Blomkamp, 2018:14)

Where the social benefits on co-design are experienced there is a real potential to foster stronger relationships with politics and democratic processes. This is a prize worthy of the process. However, it is useful not to overstate the case. The strength of co-design as a process is that it is not overwhelming to those who take part and that the foundations at each stage are robust and strong, however if expectations of its rewards are over-exaggerated this may become a top-heavy pressurised process, which collapses under the weight of expectation.

Although the language of co-design may be a recent innovation, its processes and practices are not. Youth workers have been practicing these specialised skills of co-design while other disciplines are merely coming to the start line (Davies and Merton, 2009:20). At its core, co-design equalises power relationships between all the stakeholders. This re-balancing of power dynamics between workers and young participants is a complex one, which requires an earnest and sincere approach to youth-led processes and youth power. Davies (2005) proposes that within the youth work discipline a more equalised power dynamic is created between adult and young person; more than in other related disciplines. The key to this (and to a co-design possibility) is in the sustained process of negotiation:

'The youth work negotiation has to be based on a built-in long-term strategy and requires an openness to a real give-and-take which will probably have to be sustained throughout the whole period of the young person-adult engagement. Only then are the young people likely to stay long enough to become exposed to experiential opportunities which might (though they might not) interest and benefit them – and then to sustain a personally committed rather than a merely compliant participation.' (ibid, 2005:9)

Latoya, Project F, illustrates how choice and power relate; and having a sense of control over programming ideas related to their sense of status that the programme was 'about us':

'The group was about us, not about what the leaders wanted to do. It was like if we wanted to do something we could go ahead and do it. Like if we came in and said, 'right come on we'll go a walk' or 'come on we'll go exploring somewhere' it was like 'right okay, we'll do that then'. Nothing's ever really about young people. Like it's normally a youth worker telling you what to do rather than us telling them what we wanna do so it is.'
(LATOYA, PROJECT F)

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5   The co-design principle and practice is one borne from the United Youth pilot programme. 'The choice of local programme activities was firmly within a context of co-design, which meant that the United Youth Programme Team worked with providers and young people to develop best practices and resolve emerging issues and problems in relation to design, implementation and review.' (CES, 2016:14)

'We had a couple of staff members who were really anxious taking part. But we all set out, young people and staff together 'this is the plan, this is what's gonna happen, we're all gonna stay together on this cycle'.... We had two staff members who fell off. And the young people then at the next break, were 'are you okay?', 'were you alright?' And just that levelling you know. Just that levelling with young people of like we see that that was really hard for you to do and you tried it and isn't that brilliant you know and being able to see that we're on an equal keel in terms of power.'
(YOUTH WORKER 1, PROJECT A)

'Well going back to that comment staff always say 'we're willing to do whatever you are willing to do and that's why we are covered in bruises' [from paintballing activity]. They really stick to that. 'Youth Worker 2, you said at the beginning you have to do everything we're doing.' I think staff are able to you know almost being on their level and try and understand what they're going through and give them fun activities and participate in that and also share.'
(YOUTH WORKER 2, PROJECT A)

'When they come in here, they realised I want to make decisions for myself now and I can clearly see where 'I' want to go. Although, it may be a wee bit difficult, but I am now empowered to make these decisions for myself.'
(YOUTH WORKER 4, PROJECT B)

'The fact that it was youth-led as well I think was certainly for myself, and for a lot of other people, was the best part of it. Because we were making the decisions and no one was stepping in.... it wasn't like we were going to deliberately try and push the boundaries anyway but there wasn't anyone coming in and saying 'these are the boundaries'. It was pretty much an open plan, we were able to find our boundaries ourselves and stay within them.'
(ULYSSES, PROJECT A)

'Christopher in the group. He decided that he would like to go to the gym every week, bearing in mind he's got bad knees and bad hands and bad legs and bad everything.'
(LATOYA, PROJECT F)

'I wasn't sure if that was what I wanted to do. Because at the start before I wanted to do civil engineering, but I decided against that because my cousin did it and that's why I wanted to do it. But I didn't wanna do it and then I changed it. And I wasn't sure about that one either.... But now I am.'
(BARRY ALLEN, PROJECT H)

The equalising of power is best seen when young people can show care for workers without this being viewed by workers as a weakness. Project A took part in 'Cycle against suicide' and describe such a process of kindness shown by young people, received with grace by workers:

Youth Worker 2 illustrates the authenticity of this equalised power, by describing a situation when young people can explicitly challenge the workers on their participation in all the activities along with the group:

Key concepts of co-design

Ideas of co-design come directly from youth participation models[6] many of which have control as a centralised concept. For young people in the Peace4Youth project this manifests as 'having a choice'. Co-design has two outcomes that arise from these choices – first is that young people have created a programme with greater potential to speak to peers and meet peer needs; secondly, that they are learning how to choose, a skill which challenges indecision and procrastination that can have adverse mental health impacts. For some individuals there is a realisation that they have the capacity and right to make a choice:

Ulysses from Project A explains the process of having real choices, having to think through and weigh up the consequences of options and use reason to make a decision:

Latoya shows how this decision-making can focus on meeting the needs of one individual in the group

While this may appear unfair on the other group members, there is still a value in them experiencing this decision-making process.

This process of practising to choose, results in young people learning how to challenge their own indecision, by focusing less on others and building a logic that helps lead towards a choice. Barry Allen from Project H describes this learning process for himself:

6   A range of Participation Models are set out in The Big Deal Audit of Participative Structures.

Groupwork as the vehicle for co-design

The co-design process is steeped in groupwork practices. Co-design at heart is an iterative process, which uses talking, listening, give and take, creativity and group members adopting different group roles to build towards an agreement or a product. Kirsty from Project F reaches the heart of the matter 'We all decided'. The decision is then matched with follow through – the decision leads to action.

For John McClarke in Project H the connection between being heard, the resulting action and the positive emotion is expressed:

The allocation of group roles is a negotiated process, but having a role can be motivational for participants, as described by Youth Worker 17 on project F:

Ulysses from Project A reminds us that this is not a friction-free process for participants and navigating that conflict is part of the learning of co-design:
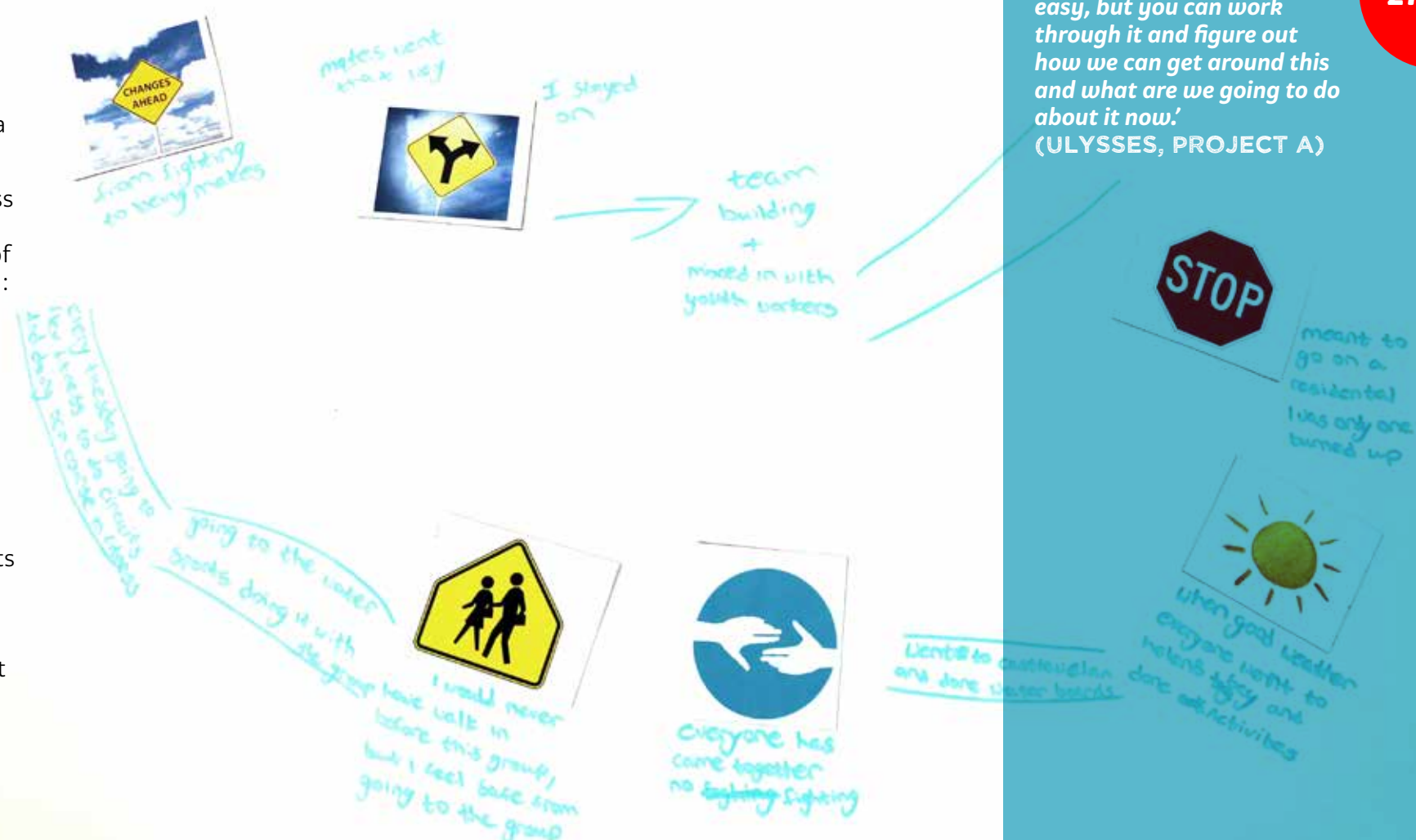
'Well you know just I feel like my voice is heard. So, you know I got to help choose what we're doing. Say do music days or you know food days and stuff like that. I felt like that was good.'
(JOHN MCCLARKE IN PROJECT H)

'They were definitely dedicated - they were coming every evening and discussing what was going on and allocating the team about who was doing what?'
(YOUTH WORKER 17, PROJECT F)

'Making decisions in a group - getting everybody to agree about what you're going to do, you know it's not always easy, but you can work through it and figure out how we can get around this and what are we going to do about it now.'
(ULYSSES, PROJECT A)

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'The three boys in particular are the ones who come every week, which was quite a shock, because they are always involved, and they love coming and doing the work. But when it came to the social action 'no, no, no', 'why, why, why?' ...'nothing will come of it, nothing, nothing' so let's hope so [that something will come of it].'
(YOUTH WORKER 20, PROJECT G)

'No, we said to the workers that it wasn't going anywhere. So, they want us to tell them if something is not good rather than still doing it and then just not liking it.'
(50 CENT, PROJECT E)

'It started off at the very beginning a very therapeutic approach and it was you know staff advise and staff will do. And then all of a sudden, it's the hands up, take responsibility, choices and consequences. And then you see them going...'so you're not helping me'. 'No. Can't help you anymore. You're at that stage now; start taking responsibility'. Then towards the end you almost see the thinking back to that therapeutic approach. We don't wanna lose you so I'm gonna present a lot of issues to you because I don't wanna lose that relationship.
(YOUTH WORKER 2, PROJECT A)

'So, we need to help them try to face them and if they face them, we can move on. I be honest with them, they are going to have relapse and stuff but it's knowing that, if we've given you the knowledge of where to go to find the supports, you can pull it back and that they can do it by themselves.'
(YOUTH WORKER 3, PROJECT B)

'And actually, the reality is we can't fix it for them either. We are really hoping that by them taking ownership of this and by us connecting them with the right people and showing all of that it will help but we will have to see what the adversity does when we get to the end of it and how much ownership they will take and what they feel they can do. We will just have to see.'
(YOUTH WORKER 21, PROJECT G)

Workers navigating the co-design map

The wisdom of workers is in identifying where to start with individuals; working out a starting point that is not patronising to individual young people but considers cues to understand what is right for this moment and this person. The co-design process, like the youth work process, begins where young people start but is hope-filled and aspirational; working at 'supporting young people to go beyond their starting points' (Davies & Merton, 2009:15). This 'going beyond' trajectory ensures that workers and young people do not become stuck in a starting place that can be limiting for the young person. The focus is for a stretching process that begins at the start. Youth Worker 20 from Project G demonstrates how pushing too hard with young people who have been demoralised for too long has dubious co-design outcomes or benefits:

To ensure that design flaws are quickly identified workers set up feedback loops to hear the views of young people and make changes:

This nuanced considered approach to co-design is illustrated by workers who identify distinct stages in the process. These stages roam from therapeutic stages of development; to autonomy; then drifting back to a more dependent stage in the pre-departure phase:

The process of building towards autonomy and independence is not a linear one for participants, rather it is characterised much more by ebbs and flows. Youth Worker 3 below uses the word relapse, not in relation to health, but in relation to independence. Workers are conscious of how these transitions towards independence can be messy and therefore they work with young people to build skills to deal with this messy reality, as outlined here by Youth Worker 21 from Project G:

Workers who can navigate the co-design map and stages can hold together an assured process with the potential for rich participant outcomes.

Personal Agency

Zimmerman and Cleary (2006:45) define personal agency as '***one's capability to originate and direct actions for given purposes. It is influenced by the belief in one's effectiveness in performing specific tasks, which is termed self-efficacy, as well as by one's actual skill.***' Thus, personal agency is a concept that intertwines self-belief and personal skills. It is also an indicator of individuals with a strong sense of internal locus of control, with beliefs that they are master of their own behaviours and resulting outcomes. Personal agency has a quality of mental strength and single-minded certainty that can be powerful and transformative for the individual.

Co-design offers a framework for how to build personal agency. The process moves from creating an idea, working to design how it might work in practice, testing it, then reviewing for future change. Within this, individuals have the body-sense experience of moving through these stages and can integrate the ***feelings and senses*** of having done a successful thing into the mental messages of success. Participants connected the success of their created programme ideas, with their own sense of personal agency and efficacy:

First participants experience motivation from their co-design experience:

Second was the ability to evaluate the design in action, to assess the flaws and successes and to adapt and change, based on their critical thinking. The ability to sustain their efforts in the face of barriers is a further aspect of personal agency on show in the Peace4Youth programmes:

Third was their belief in self; and their ability to directly influence whether they experienced success or failure (a key concept in personal agency):

This combination of skills, attitudes and experience which co-design can offer aligns comfortably with how personal agency has been grown and nurtured throughout the programme.

'And that was maybe the youth-led aspect where they said 'we'd love to do this', and they got an opportunity to do it. And then you found attendance was high because you were giving them something that was relevant and modernised to what they wanted and what they're going through.'
(YOUTH WORKER 2, PROJECT A)

'And they evaluated it - how it all went for the next one. Now they changed something for the next one and one of the things that they thought maybe the egg hunt didn't suit maybe 1-year olds and 2-year olds; they are going to use the money that they collected from the previous one to book Mr Tumbles to come - the children's entertainer for the younger age group in between 1 to 2 years old. The older ones were playing football and sport stuff. So that lower age group that was kind of losing out. There were a lot of young people in the community in that age group. Again, they were full of great ideas.'
(YOUTH WORKER 17, PROJECT F)

'And that belief came from myself. Nobody forced me to do that. I can do it myself. 'If I can do something like that, then I can get on with the morning and I can do this.' That's the idea of using the outdoor sports and the activities that come from it. It is about showing that you might not succeed, you might fall down, but you have tried, there is no harm in not succeeding, you can still try it again, you try it again and you might be successful. But it's about moving forwards and positive thinking 'I can do it' and if I believe in myself and if I push myself then I can achieve greatness.'
(PROJECT C, YOUTH WORKER 10)

'Yeah it really taught me a lot of - not really lessons - but how to work in a group, how to take on a leadership role and then to take on the responsibilities of a leader.'
(ULYSSES, PROJECT A)

'And be able to pass it on to the next person to give them a chance to run things and let them see what it's like and then also to see what it's like when other people are running things.'
(ULYSSES, PROJECT 19).

'We did this mural that was focused on helping troubled teens going through depression and all of that, so the mural really wants to help people in the town.'
(REECE, PROJECT H)

'But this year I've had more of a role, a more authoritative role; well maybe not authoritative, but I had my own group this year that was a big thing for me after all that has gone on. I have been given this responsibility and I was loving it. Even with the younger ones, maybe about 14, when they are coming up to you and they are asking 'what do I do if a child says this?' or ' how do I make this child feel valued?' And people coming and asking you - that just made me feel brilliant about myself because they can come to me about those sorts of things, because I want to be someone who can be approached.'
(SHANNON, PROJECT I)

'After the program was actually ending I was helping people I was actually sharing my ideas and they were listened to. I was helping people out - younger people like letting them know that they can take the right steps and end up with confidence.'
(NINJA, PROJECT H)

Cascading my learning to others

Co-design is a slick approach to developing leadership skills. For individuals who grasp the challenges, they can identify their growth and understanding of being a leader, as Ulysses clearly sees:

But the big prize for Ulysses is in having experience of using these leadership skills with others; in using skills for a wider purpose beyond himself:

Time and time again, the skills developed through co-design were most treasured if they could see them having an impact with and for others who might need their help:

Taking my place in the community

Ultimately young participants crave a connection to their own place; they crave the recognition that they are of value and valued by those around them. Contribution to a community is a way that young people can find this validation. For some, this began with identifying gaps in services that they could offer:

This co-design process offered individuals confidence to try out programme ideas first with their own group, then with a wider audience, but ultimately, they sought ways of connecting to their own communities:

The co-design process binds together all three of the Peace4Youth outcome areas of personal development, good relations and citizenship. This process offers workers a logical pathway towards young people developing leadership skills and practices and builds citizenship moments. They build skills for good relations through developing conflict management and negotiation skills. Participants gain in confidence and understand the skills they need to use their voice to express their opinion; and the skills needed to enact some idea for and within their community. The process of co-design within Peace4Youth is brought to life by workers who use informal education approaches to harness the strengths of the participants. Crucially, this approach unlocks the strengths of many participants in ways that are new for them and is a signature strength in the Peace4Youth programme.

'They were more proactive. They've started the walking group. They were able to look into gaps in their areas because they were actively involved in their community in some capacity maybe not by doing, helping or volunteering but they live there. They were quite vocal and being able to say, 'this is what we think we need in our community.'
(YOUTH WORKER 19, PROJECT F)

'We have done the family fun day in Easter. It was brilliant. We get great feedback from the community. We wouldn't have expected the great outcome as we did.'
(KIRSTY, PROJECT F)

'It was listening to the boys, gardening was quite popular and outdone the negatives... The boys' ideas were to grow mainly fruit and vegetables for elderly people that were shared through the good morning service, which is a 'call service' for older people in the community.
(YOUTH WORKER 19, PROJECT F)

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INFORMAL EDUCATION

Being young person-centred along with creating safe and stimulating environments are two of the principles that underpin the Peace4Youth programme. These principles are demonstrated in young people's description of their experience of the learning environment created in their projects.

The programme design intrinsically requires an experiential learning approach, however we go beyond Kolb's Learning Cycle and return to Dewey's understanding of experiential learning that does not separate the person's previous experience from their current situation. While Kolb's cycle is foundational in many planning cycles in informal education, we must recognise that workers and young people on the Peace4Youth programme bring all their previous experiences with them and are affected by both their past and the current experiences on the programme.

Greenaway (2008: 365) is helpful here for he reminds us that Dewey's interest was focused on those experiences that are forceful, stimulating and likely to live on within the consciousness of those who encounter them, a point clarified by Pring, who suggests:

'Growth or (the) 'educative process' ... involves not just more of the same (like a river which gets bigger) but a 'transformation' of what one previously was. One thinks, experiences and feels differently. 'Experience is transformed'. One's understanding of the world is reconceptualised.' (2007:26)

For Dewey this process of 'transaction' is dynamic and always two-way, for the interaction involves an impact on the environment by the individual, as well as in turn an impact on the individual by the environment (Ord and Leather, 2017). For Dewey, experience necessarily contains both these discrete aspects. In short, we are at the same time shaped **by** our environment and **shaping** our environment.

Appreciating the informal education process

For many participants of the Peace4Youth projects, the experience of learning is a positive one. To enjoy learning and the learning environment for some is entirely new. This juxtaposes their experiences with the formal education system, which has not always yielded the same benefits for individuals.

Ulysses articulates his current experience in Project A. He notices the respect shown by youth workers and young people toward each other, the conscious use of the self on the part of the youth worker demonstrating congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard and how these conditions enabled him to engage in the programme with more confidence:

Ann from Project D describes the importance of empathy in building a relationship that enables learning to take place. She speaks of how each young person's needs and starting point were taken into account and that participants experienced a recognition of their uniqueness within the project:

Jimmy from Project D describes a chaotic experience of primary school that resulted in a rolling suspension. He talks about feeling protected in the programme and that has clearly been a factor in enabling him to join and continue on the project. The impact for Jimmy is that he feels that being on the project has saved his life. He recognises that this is an extreme statement but assures the researcher that he is deliberate in his choice of words.

Lynn from Project E recognises small but important changes in her behaviour in the programme:

The informal learning environment is significant for young people in changing how they view their personal capacity to learn and, in some cases, complete accredited courses. Recognition of learning between the young person and the youth worker is characterised by moments of insight and feelings of pride and achievement. The engagement between the young person and the worker is not toward the acquisition of a fixed body of knowledge but rather the development of the young person and the meaning they place on that development for themselves. The effectiveness of the informal education methodology employed by youth workers is evident in the comments from young people and youth workers.

'From the very start of the course there has been a sense of respect and authority if you know what I mean. We didn't just come in and go out. There the leaders were great, they are not the teachers, where we have to sit down and listen to them all day. From the get-go, they [the youth workers] were open and honest, it wasn't them telling us what to do. It was them telling us what's going on, what's happening and what we can do about it; that sort of thing. Their involvement in the course and the fact that they're trying to get personally involved with you on the course and if you don't like it, they back off. They are acting like real people.'
(ULYSSES, PROJECT A)

'Yeah it's not the same, it's not like a class where you're all going to be treated the same, we're all going to do the same tests and the same work. It's like they make every single person feel special. I think like one of the main things is the personal connections. Like they're able to not compare and put themselves in the same situation. Whenever you're in school like it's hard, a teacher will tell you things from a book of how to deal with things but Youth Worker 12 and Youth Worker 11 or through any of the organisation's leaders - it's kind of like - 'I went through that as well, this is how I...'. And then 'that could help you'.... and then 'these are other things that I tried that might help you.' And I think it's the connection that they've made with every single person one of us that it's so different with each person.'
(ANN, PROJECT D)

Yeah, you spoke a lot in one-to-ones, or with Youth Worker 12 and Youth Worker 11; but the structure of the course it is just absolutely brilliant. Me, I had never done school. I had went to school but I was kicked out of my first primary school in Primary 4; I finished my primary school and I was kicked out of my first secondary school and put on a rolling suspension. What they done was, you know the local school here, they sponsored me to go to tech; and it just... it never worked. You know it [Project D] is all about protecting yourself and they protect every single young person who is in there; every single one of us. It is just like that bottom statement [on his highways map] - 'it saved my life; a lot of people can say that is a bit extreme, but it is the truth; and it is the truth.'
(JIMMY, PROJECT D)

'My confidence for one, timekeeping, punctuality like in school I was always late because I didn't enjoy it and I didn't want to go in. But literally I have never missed a day of group, never. And I've always been early.'
(LYNN, PROJECT E)

'So that took a lot of pressure off because I felt at that time that I was really slow and stupid just because education wasn't clicking with me.'
(JOHN MC CLARKE, PROJECT H)

'Honestly, it's the motivation from the course. So, six months is a long time and when you're going there 3 days a week and you're meeting positive people that reassure you about your choices and about how you're doing it. They come up to you when you're going wrong, that positivity you don't get that from school. If you're wrong in school that's it, it's detention or a slap on the wrist or whatever. It doesn't teach you, it just shows you if you do wrong, you'll get punished for it. But here if you are doing wrong, they say 'no that's wrong, but you can do it, you can learn from that' and you think 'ok I got in mind the next time I'm doing something like that' and you can think about that and that's the greatest part about it - it's not a strict regime, you take it at your own speed. And you do it your way and as long as you're doing right.'
(JIMMY CARR, PROJECT H)

'Once you're kind of tarred as a particular type of student you don't get any attention. That's it. And then kind of for personal development and career guidance young people leave that environment thinking my only option is my Leaving Cert. I don't have it so to hell with it, I'm just gonna do nothing. And the problem is a lot of young people are doing their Leaving Cert around that age of eighteen so there's no way of actually reaching out to them and getting to them unless they break the law, go into prison and come out as a criminal. Then they'll get that support.'
(YOUTH WORKER 22, PROJECT H)

'Saying things like 'do you remember when we did....?' and they were having conversations about talking about their identity and who they are and what's important to them and for most of them most of the time the Protestant/Catholic identity didn't come up. And that was really important because it was important as we move on to consider what part of your identity do you want to keep? What part of your identity do you not want to keep? What do you think of another community?'
(YOUTH WORKER 25, PROJECT I)

These interactions between young people and youth workers can appear light and general, however Wolfe (2004) reminds us that we should not be fooled into thinking that because conversation is often an informal, everyday activity it is therefore straight-forward and easy to use successfully.

She states:

'On the contrary, like other apparently simple aspects of human activity, conversation is complex and open to different interpretations. After all, can any of us claim that we have never finished a conversation feeling confused, sensing some misunderstanding but unable to identify exactly what 'went wrong'? I hope not— because we need this sensitivity to the possible nuances and confusions of conversation to guide us into exploring critically the part which conversations play in our practice.' (2004:121)

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

Mental Health and Young People

The Peace IV programme sits against a backdrop of growing mental health problems for young people across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Limited access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), counselling and to early intervention activities are indicators of both a growing crisis and a failure in policy and resources of mental health services in the Republic of Ireland (Irish Times, 18/2/2019). A similar picture emerges for Northern Ireland with alarming statistics for youth mental health problems (NICCY, 2017) and concomitant services and policy responses (NICCY, 2018). In conducting a rights-based review of mental health services for young people, the NI Children's Commissioner funnels her attention to the vital role played by voluntary sector players:

'Children and young people were very clear that the services provided by voluntary and community sector organisations, were just as essential in meeting their mental health needs as those provided by the statutory system.' (NICCY, 2018: 6)

This perspective directly mirrors the experiences of participants and workers through the Peace4Youth programme, with young people presenting with complex mental health needs and learning issues; and voluntary and community youth workers as the 'first responders'. Young people presented with both acute mental health problems and chronic issues affecting everyday functioning. Workers reported responding with urgency where mental health is particularly grave; while providing sustained support and skills work for individuals with moderate or limited means to keep their mental health afloat.

Acute and chronic issues

Suicide was mentioned only once by name across 54 interviews with participants and workers:

It is unclear whether the absence of this phrasing in interviews is an indication of mental health problems that fall shy of this acute state; or whether those interviewed were more metaphorical in their language. There is no doubt that other troubled and troubling conditions were expressed - of anxiety, depression, being hopeless, being lost or 'being bad' and a recognition of how bad things can get:

The young participants spoke candidly about their mental health state and repeatedly made connections between these personal internal struggles and how they functioned less well in the world:

For participants who spoke of having poor mental health, the internal issues they faced were quickly seeping out to other parts of their lives:

'There's a lot of people suffering from mental health and actual drug problems, suicide; not having suicide thoughts but just having family suicide.' **(GABRIEL JESUS, PROJECT A)**

'I really can say that Project D has more than changed my life; it's saved my life and my kids from having a life with no father.' **(JIMMY, PROJECT D)**

'I can't chat to people. If I have to go somewhere that there is a big crowd, I would just panic and get sweaty palms and feel lost or 'I don't want to be here'. **(1 MILLION STRONG, PROJECT B)**

'Before the course I was very depressed, and I was diagnosed a couple of years ago with general anxiety disorder like. Even going out and even going to the shop was hard'. **(ULYSSES, PROJECT A)**

'I was so reserved I just didn't even want to speak on the phone. I was so stressed, over-stress and anxiety and everything from school.' **(ANN, PROJECT D)**

'I really didn't leave the house that much and things were not great for me there. Because as I said here I did terribly in school because I have ADD and I just can't concentrate on things.' **(JOHN MCCLARKE, PROJECT H)**

'I went completely bad and completely downhill; I was just sitting in the house. It was horrible. I went to school and then I went to the Project - I didn't really participate that much I just came to show up.' **(SHANNON, PROJECT H)**

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LIFEMAPS – how youth work can build the mental health skills of young people

Whether by design or default, the Peace4Youth workforce have been practising many of the skills of positive psychology, as outlined by its founder Martin Seligman (1998:2):

'Psychology is not just the study of weakness and damage; it is also the study of strength and virtue. Treatment is not just fixing what is broken, it is nurturing what is best within ourselves.'

The LIFEMAPS model (McArdle & Ward, 2015) is a model which meshes theory and practice of youth work and positive psychology, to illustrate ways to boost youth mental health. LIFEMAPS is an acronym for eight interconnected concepts that describe a holistic approach to developing young people's mental health. The Peace4Youth workers echo the concepts and practices in this model, illuminating the impact they have on young people. There are four concepts from this model, explored here in greater detail, that have been consistently evidenced through interviews with workers and young people – these are:
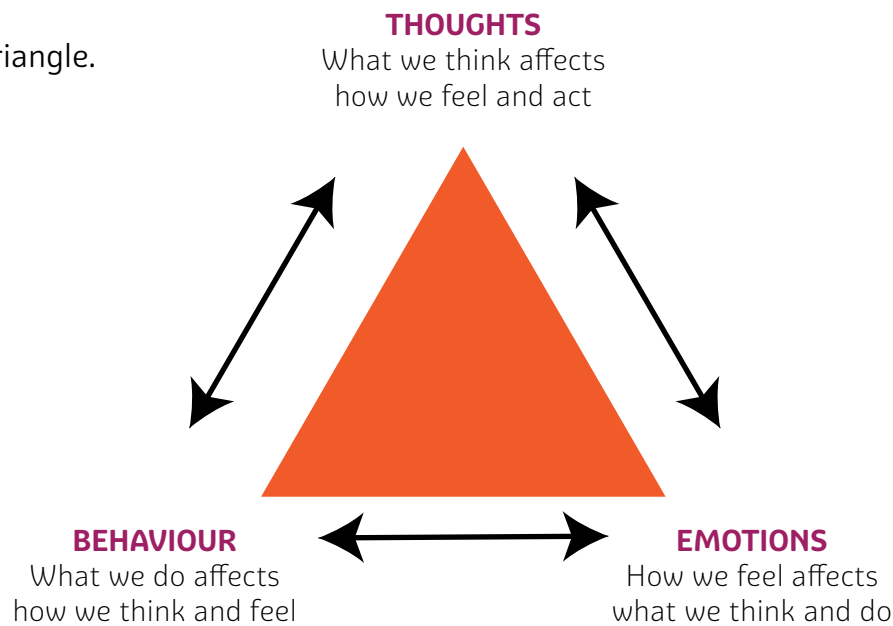I for Intrinsic Motivation;
A for Accomplishments;
P for Purpose and
S for Social Connections.

Creating a pathway, one stepping stone at a time

To understand and interact with mental health as a dynamic rather than a static condition, it is worth referring to the cognitive triangle to consider how thoughts, feelings and behaviours interact to either build individuals higher and wider; or to lead downwards and narrow thinking.

To build mental health, various clinical interventions focus on changing thoughts (e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) or changing feelings (counselling or therapy). The central place for youth work is to intervene in introducing action; encouraging doing; promoting participation, new opportunities and activity. The result of changing an action can impact positively on thoughts and subsequently on feelings, acting as a catalyst. Youth workers propose taking small steps, when motivation is low; and as momentum builds, youth workers suggest bigger steps, until great strides are taken. But the strength here is in the practical real-world steps that are negotiated for and with the young person as a first step on their pathway.

Diagram 5: The Cognitive Triangle.

THOUGHTS
What we think affects
how we feel and act

BEHAVIOUR
What we do affects
how we think and feel

EMOTIONS
How we feel affects
what we think and do

John McClarke tells us of the practical information and steps he encountered in Project H:

Shannon from Project I points to the input of the worker with soft guidance that offer a way 'back on track':

Jane from Project H explains the power of the practical suggestions from the worker in helping manage her stammer. The practical support given by the youth workers is most powerful when the youth workers finds the place for silence as the most appropriate response to a difficult moment. Young participants talked in interviews of the times when the young person's commitments were prioritised over the programme or group. The worker's silence in these anxiety-ridden situations is often the greatest source of comfort for an individual, when stress levels are high:

Workers depict how they create a listening space as a practical response to mental health:

These interventions act as stepping stones for young people to create their own pathway, with access to new practical and emotional supports.

Intrinsic Motivation

Motivation is a complex interplay of many psychological processes and circumstances (Deci & Ryan, 2000). What motivates one individual is a dis-incentive for another. But in the case of Peace4Youth we see young participants who move from being motivated by simple rewards (extrinsic motivation); to those young people being personally motivated to attend and take leadership or co-design roles (intrinsic motivation). The benefits of extrinsic motivation are well-researched, with evidence that external factors can motivate us initially, with behaviours improving for limited periods; followed by a slump in motivation.

For youth workers, finding the initial motivation that will get the young person started is vital. The Peace4Youth workers show great skill in identifying motivators across a diverse range of young people, with a wide range of approaches and activities stated by participants of the Young Voices event, 2018[7]. (YouthPact, 2018: 6) For some of the participants, breaking the isolation or breaking the boredom were key drivers in getting involved:

There is a connection between building motivation and building of routine. At the early stages of engagement between the worker and the young participant, the introduction of routine is not a strong selling point; however, as participants describe the benefits of the programme, they refer to routine as a positive lifestyle development:

For others in the early stages of engagement, the incentive payment was an initial motivator; but not the key to remaining. However, it is important to note that there is no incentive payment available for those young people in the Republic of Ireland and this caused some friction for cross-border participants, with young people from NI accessing incentive payments; while other group members cannot (YouthPact, 2018:7). Peace4Youth workers show an understanding that initial motivators will soon wear thin and it is their role to discover the hook that will motivate an individual to stick with and complete the programme:

[7]   Young Voices is a dynamic approach to engaging young people to explore issues important to them, and to engage with and influence policy-makers on policy and practice responses to these issues. The first Young Voices event run by YouthPact focused on young people's experiences of the Peac4Youth programme. View full report at **www.youth.ie/sites/youth.ie/files/ YouthPact%20Young%20Voices%20-%20Something%20to%20say%20 about%20Peace4Youth.pdf**

The hook for some individuals lies in the optimistic style which workers present. The positivity is something which becomes attractive to them; and they wish to be part of that mood and environment:

For some, anticipation acts as a motivator – the excitement of wondering and imagining what is coming next. This is most palpable when young people are experiencing new, different and creative opportunities that are outside their previous sphere of life:

For others the positive engagement in the learning process becomes an experience that they wish to repeat and return to. This change of mindset on learning is directly transferable across personal and academic life, with individuals who enjoy learning, also showing a healthier approach to their own mental health and internal dialogues:

Latoya from Project F describes a topic and speaker that captured her interest and was a stimulating encounter:

'Yeah because if I stayed in the house it just torments me. I can't stay in the house. See this here, [Project E] it just gets me out. I'm in a routine now that I wake up at 9 o'clock and get washed dressed and out the door for 10 / 10:30 sometimes it's 11 but I'm up and I get a coffee and that's me so I'm in a routine now I don't even need an alarm set where-as before this I was waking up at 1 o'clock and half the day's gone and lying in bed because I've been up till all hours.' (50 CENT, PROJECT E)

'It [Project G] has put me into a routine and routine that I look forward to going and doing. I enjoy coming here. I look forward to coming here. I know that I'm going to hook up with people that I like and look up to. I'm doing something that I like. I'm doing something that I really want to do and that I'm really interested in so whenever you're doing something that you love like...' (DENISE, PROJECT G)

'In the beginning you probably would be like a routine - always in the morning I don't want to get out of bed but when you get into it and you'll get used to it and you get excited about all what's happening today. They don't really tell us what's happening so they kind of surprise us.' (SKYE, PROJECT C)

'The money - that helps with food, absolutely. Young people if they don't like something, those wee incentives won't keep them coming in.' (YOUTH WORKER 4, PROJECT B)

'Honestly it's the motivation from the course. So six months is a long time and when you're going there 3 days a week and you're meeting positive people that reassure you about your choices and about how you're doing it; they come up to when you're going wrong - that positivity' (JIMMY CARR, PROJECT H)

'And that's what keeps you going, and you finished there, and you think that was great. I wonder what tomorrow is going to be like, then wonder what next week is going to be like. It keeps you coming back.' (JIMMY CARR, PROJECT H)

'Learning for me, I don't know how to describe it. It's like if I'm not interested in it, and I wish I could control it, then my brain kind of just goes different places. But here because it's so informal it's not 'you just have to sit rigid', 'you have to listen'. I feel like it's great for me and I can actually listen and take part rather than be somewhere else in my head.' (JOHN MCCLARKE, PROJECT H)

'And he was saying like how travellers are not supposed to be like gay or anything but he's gay. And it was like 'oh my God'. It was amazing. I loved it. I am so easy fascinated though, so I am.' (LATOYA, PROJECT F)

Willpower and Waypower

Hope theory houses two core concepts that relate to our perspective on the future – willpower and waypower. Snyder et al (2002) propose that waypower is where individuals can find pathways to their chosen goals, even though the pathway has obstacles; willpower is the motivation to follow that pathway and face the obstacles. Willpower alone without direction and without a clear pathway will dissipate. Waypower without willpower will similarly be continuously self-defeating. The waypower is developed by youth workers and participants working on goals together and using information to weigh up options and build a pathway step by step. Willpower is practiced through persistence in the face of obstacles. Peace4Youth participants describe this process of failing and working through failure. The two examples here arise from volunteering and academic work but with transferable life learning:

Jane from Project H explains how failing in her course work can offer a useful lesson:

Catricia in Project I worked through her struggles in her volunteering role as a Summer Scheme Leader with 12-14-year olds -

This process is a slow purposeful one for workers who identify programme ideas and approaches that stretch not stress participants; and they work on a one to one basis to build thinking skills and the mental attitude to face challenges and struggle. Youth Worker 15 describes the mental preparation work with Kirsty, a young participant, in preparation for swimming in the sea:

Youth Worker 2 from Project A also outlines how tasks are assembled to build and practice skills of resilience –

Ultimately, it is the combination of waypower and willpower that offers the greatest hope for individuals. Ann from Project D illustrates how she built both from fragile beginnings:

A balanced perspective on past, present and future

Time spent thinking about the past can focus on regrets, painful experiences or can accentuate good times beyond reality. Time spent thinking of the future can be of hopes and dreams that are attainable or not, worries of what happens next or excitement. But where we develop an unbalanced view of time, we can find ourselves being overly concerned about the past, present or future; and with a crooked perspective on reality. Participants will often enter the projects with a past-mindedness and no sense of a present or future. Where a participant can have a positive focus on the future, their intrinsic motivation and their sense of purpose is heightened. For some, this new perspective can present a pivotal moment:

But a focus on the future is not enough, if there is no attention given to the present. Davies and Merton (2009:22) identify a central theme of youth work as 'working with young people's here and now – and with their transitions'. For Peace4Youth workers who practice this principle, the concept of slowing down, valuing young people for who they are and not just what they do, can create the environment where transformation can happen for a young person and a sense of accomplishment that they have been able to affect change in their own life.

'I just know myself. I know with my anxiety like I will start doubting myself. But like Youth Worker 23 and Youth Worker 22, they even said 'you know if you need any help at all just you know give us a buzz.' They've just told me like you know 'you have to fail to succeed, and you're not gonna you know pass everything in life'. Like I always feel that you know if I fail I'm like 'aw Jesus am I good enough like. Maybe I should just give up'. But I know that's not the case. You've to keep trying like.'
(JANE, PROJECT H)

'it was just like, if they're not going to listen I was getting stressed, but I walked away for 5 and came back and it was, we got through it'.
(CATRICIA, PROJECT I)

'There were a lot of discussions leading to the event [swimming] because she wasn't gonna go. So, there was three mentoring sessions and a lot of discussions about it,'
(YOUTH WORKER 15, PROJECT F)

'We took him on a residential and one of the challenges that was set for him was a four hour walk to go to kind of different stations and explore his personal development, explore his identity and who he is and where he fits into the community and looking to the future.'
(YOUTH WORKER 2, PROJECT A)

'That's like a warning sign because the road was pretty clear. I was clear what the plan was, I knew that it was going to be - there was going to be difficult distractions from not going to the project. I knew that if I could just get through this rough bit of being nervous and shy that I would end up breaking my shell. So, I knew that I was going to get around or through it somehow.'
(ANN, PROJECT D)

'Applying for jobs I actually felt confident that 'aww I'm going to get this', I felt positive about myself. That's the positivity I had, 'ok, I'm going to get this'; before I was 'I'm not going to get this so there's no point in applying for it'. But now, I know it's 'I'm applying for this; I'm going to get it' - and if I don't that will be alright.'
(NINJA, PROJECT H)

'At the beginning, I had no real plan, just living day by day. I was pretty much living off Mum and Dad. I was on JSA. I just used that money for stupid things... After starting Project B, I wanted to change my life. I felt a bit more motivated to do something with my life.'
(EL DIABLO, PROJECT B)

'It's probably the change in my day. Like I don't know. I used to just lie around. I don't know' I just now enjoy my days more. I like waking up in the morning.'
**(EMILY, PROJECT C)**

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A place for accomplishments

Formal education has historically rewarded individuals for reaching the end product (the grade, the exam, the completion of portfolio). This recognition of accomplishment favours some over others, with many young people having limited opportunities to have their efforts rewarded. Dweck (2006) distinguishes between performance goals (those with a benchmark) and learning goals (those that recognise, and reward growth and distance travelled). For Dweck (2006) rewarding the achievement of learning goals builds a growth mindset, a great asset for positive mental health. This idea of recognising accomplishments combines with the ideas from Fredrickson (2007) on emotions; whereby the expression of pride in what has been achieved is a building block for strong mental health.

Peace4Youth workers use accomplishments as a core approach in their work. Programme content will often focus on some tangible activities that will yield achievable certificates for participants. This is part of a step-by-step approach in boosting the growth mindset. Completing short courses such as manual handling, first aid or money management become important not only for the course content, but also in building a picture of how success *feels*, for those who have rarely experienced this.

Two experiences stand out. Firstly, participants spoke of the role that volunteering gave them and their sense of accomplishment without needing a public display of achievement. They were *certain* of their important position and their sense of accomplishment:

Secondly, the public moments where participants represented themselves and their projects at an event. The trust which was instilled in individuals was part of their pride:
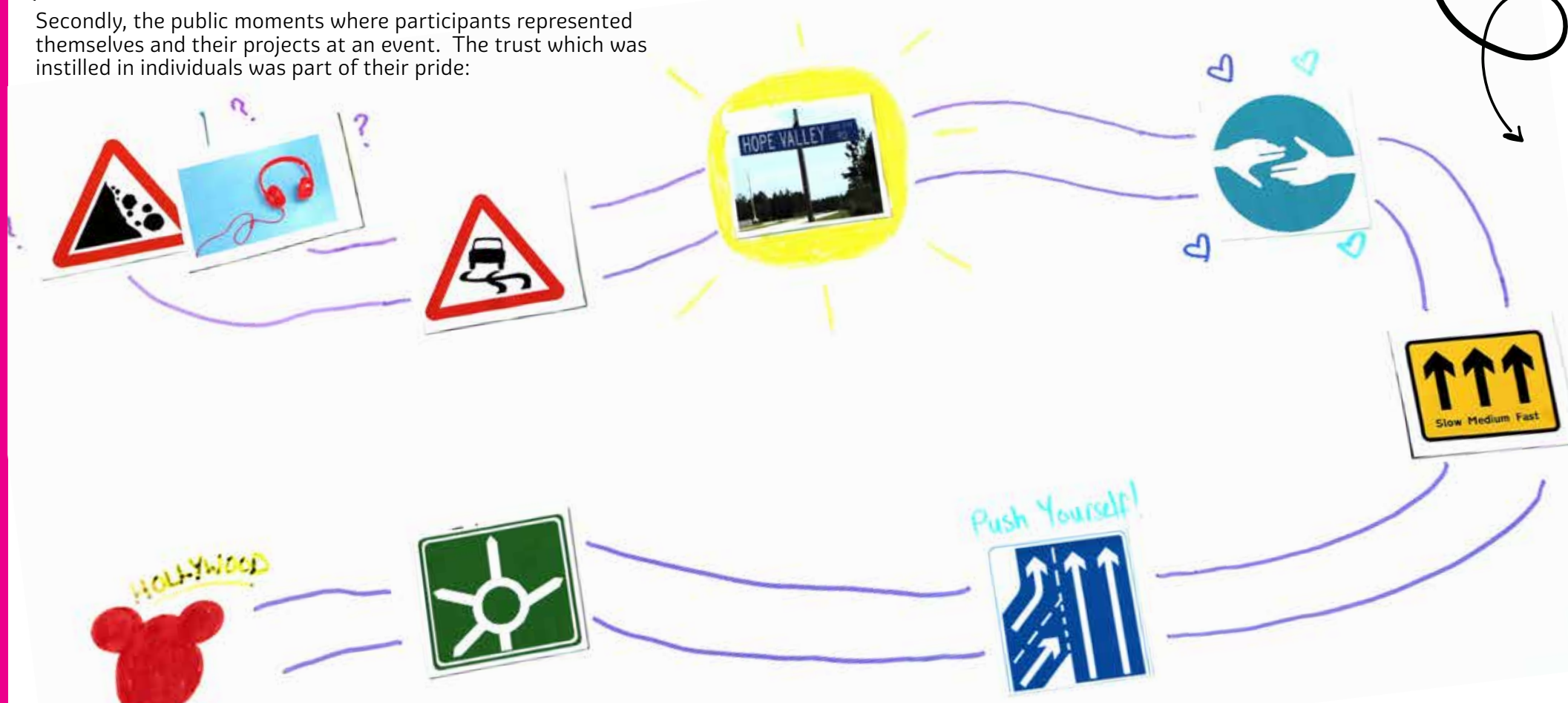
Finding happiness under a stone

For these young people, their descriptions of their movement and optimistic outlook is powerful:

Elsa from Project E begins to specify the skills needed in building and keeping strong mental health; an entity that is created and re-created rather than just found or taken for granted:

This resonates with the elements of positive psychology and LIFEMAPS whereby '*the underpinning principle of LIFEMAPS is that positive mental health is not uncovered, is not a discovery, but is built through action, skills and attitudes, fostered through relationships.*' (McArdle & Ward, 2015:6)

Dirty Diana distinguishes between support and advice giving, and hope. Hope for him, sounds like an embedded experience that has the potential to transform, enabling him to make use of help and support. Clearly support and advice is appreciated and important, however hope for him, has an ethereal quality, which lingers and has the potential to remain long after the project has finished.

'*You are building bonds with those younger people in the project and I thought that was brilliant. You see those young people a couple of days a week you see them every day of the summer scheme having a bit of craic and chatting away and they're saying 'can you do this activity today?' So, they're wanting you to lead activities because they enjoy how you do it and I think, for me, as well because I have such low self-esteem and I was in a bad place, that there really brought me up.*'
(SHANNON, PROJECT I)

'*...and then 2 months ago I went to the Lead Organisation to talk to the board of directors for employment to try and get people over 18 back into college again. So that was a good deal.*'
(DIRTY DIANA, PROJECT G)

'*That was the launch of the overall project that we spoke at. I got to speak about how Project H has changed me personally and helped me be a better person.*'
(JIMMY CARR, PROJECT H)

'*I would never have got up in front of everyone because I was actually shaking that day and I stood up in front of everyone and opened the celebration.*'
(NINJA, PROJECT H)

'*I think my Mum and like my family members have said they seen a change in me. That I'm happier because I had been depressed but that they've seen a change in me. And my aunt even said that I lost weight and I said 'ok thank you'. It's nice that my family thinks and knows that I'm happier. It's like a new me.*'
(SKYE, PROJECT C)

'*Just like being in a better mindset even. I was just really sitting in the house, I wasn't really doing much and just wasting my days away and my daughter was the same. And now she has improved, with other kids and stuff and starting to come around; it's just better; like I was in a place where I, my mood was a wee bit low and stuff; and I think that getting up every day does help. So, I have really enjoyed it that way.*'
(ELSA, PROJECT E)

'*The other thing that is good is they give you hope, which is different to support and advice. I mean they give you real good support and advice. If you go down and you're not feeling good in the day, you've got them to talk to and if you are feeling extremely down they take you out for coffee which is nice. It's like having a befriender, which is good for some of the other younger people. I'm 24. I'm like an old man so I'm used to things. They give you hope, they give you hope for better things to come.*'
(DIRTY DIANA, PROJECT G)

'One of the evenings after we had food and got settled we went into the Scout Masters lounge or whatever with comfy seats and everything. We just sat down round the fire and talked about what happened to us in the past and what got us here and I think for the leaders, the leaders were also in the room; so they were also speaking about their past. For them to do that so early on it really put a trust in them, they're telling us their stories and we're telling them our stories and it just sort of after that point I didn't see them as leaders they were just part of the programme as well; and I think that was on their part an extremely strategic useful thing to do and it is because they obviously got to see more of us and afterwards pretty much everyone trusts them; it made things a lot easier.'
(ULYSSES, PROJECT A)

'Youth Worker 11 was then left and he helped me how to physically feel better. So to get out of the house and he showed me all these different walks I can do around the area because he's quite outdoors-y and he loves walking. I love doing all that and that's something that I did miss whenever I was sitting in the house doing that and he really helped me with that and it was nice to connect with. Because it's hard to connect with people especially whenever someone is older than you and you don't know if you have anything in common so that's something really nice.'
(ANN, PROJECT D)

CONSCIOUS USE OF SELF

Being constant, being real

As workers and young people describe the role which Peace4Youth workers inhabit, it becomes apparent that this relationship is not a conventional one, experienced or expected in the 'helping professions'. Smith (2002:21) reminds us of the complexity of the nature of this youth work relationship. She refers to the emphasis given by youth work literature to ethics, boundaries and professional distance (ibid, 2002:21), which offers limited insight into the nature of the relationship. To understand more fully, Smith moves to grasp the quality of **authenticity** and **accompanying** within the youth work relationship. De St. Croix (2016) speaks of **love** and **loving** as central tenets of a 'caring engagement'. Murphy and Ord (2013) grapple with the nuances of how workers navigate boundaries and self-disclosure to develop relationships that have **elements of sharing**; but with **purposeful intentions behind the sharing**. Within these relationships, the interplay of emotions with skills and reason means that workers are not merely repeating the competencies developed in their professional training; but about '**a way of being**' (Rogers, 1980)

Real and interesting

Murphy and Ord (2013:8) suggest that the concept of self-disclosure has become entwined too tightly with safeguarding and child protection and miss the inherent concept. The foundation of self-disclosure is 'simply the process of making the self-known to others', an inevitable process of engaging with others, whether in a professional setting or not' (ibid, 2013:8). The intention of disclosure then requires some consideration, with Murphy and Ord proposing that disclosures are made with 'conscious intent' (Rosenfeld & Gilbert, 1989 cited in Murphy & Ord, 2013) and that the guiding principle for self-disclosure is first and foremost to empower the respondent (ibid, 2013:5).

The conscious use of self is a feature of the Peace4Youth programme with clarity of purpose being demonstrated in the self-disclosures described. Brown (1994, cited in Murphy & Ord, 2013:3) reminds us of this quid-pro-quo; as an '**expectation that the workers will join with members in some of the personal sharing and disclosure**'. Ulysses describes both the process of sharing, the purposeful-ness of intention and the impact on the relationship:

On this occasion for Ulysses, the discussion and shared personal details with some depth of intimacy developed trust that had an impact on the rest of the programme experience. For others such as Anne it was sharing of lifestyle; of having activities in common with the worker, even though the differences between them were more overtly obvious:

For John McClarke, the authenticity comes from the workers being fun; he also describes how clear it is when workers are faking it:

Jane spoke of the emotional comfort that the worker's warmth gave her, but Jane also makes a link between the smiley-ness of the worker and the purpose of these positive relationships:

Youth Worker 23 makes a connection between the authentic self and the professional self; whereby the '**quality of the relationship can be therapeutic, and it depends very largely on the [practitioner] being a real person**' (Manthei, 1997, cited in Murphy & Ord, 2013:3)

This perspective is backed up by Youth Worker 20, speaking of participant Denise with the belief that showing humanity can have a deeper impact:

Youth Worker 11 is clear that authenticity is central to a therapeutic-type experience for young people:

'They're actually fun people. It's not like adults trying to be 'oh we're down with the kids' sort of thing. As I said they're fun. They're not trying hard. They actually care. Like I know they do. And I think that's the main thing. It's like if you care about the people you're working with, you make that known, not you know verbalise it, but at least you know in the way you communicate you can kind of tell with somebody.'
(JOHN MCCLARKE, PROJECT H)

'Youth Worker 23, she was so, just when you met her first she was just so smiley and so chatty, and you just felt comfortable around her just straight away like. You know when you just kinda click with someone. And I think she's just like that with everyone like. She just is such a great... and Youth Worker 22 as well like. Once you meet Youth Worker 2, aw sure they just chat away to you like. You can have the craic with them. They don't make you feel uncomfortable or anything. And you know they're just so encouraging like. They really do... They don't, I don't wanna say push, but they really encourage you to just, you know, do your best. You know don't be afraid.'
(PROJECT H, JANE)

'A huge thing is actually getting involved in the activities with them. Playing that bit of sport with them or being a bit silly. You know you're human at the end of the day. You're not there to come down on them heavy-handed. You know, you just want them to relax in this environment. Listening to them and their stories and also believing in them and what they tell you. You believe their stories you know. And giving them appropriate steps to take action if they need to.'
(YOUTH WORKER 23, PROJECT H)

'Things are starting to happen for her now, so she can actually see that we are human and that we are looking out for her. It's not just doing work, we are actually looking out for her and not just saying things for the sake of it.'
(YOUTH WORKER 20, PROJECT G)

'It's very much a human role. I come with my frailty, my vulnerability, but also my knowledge, my skills and my wisdom, my love - all of this comes but also my brokenness. So, it's all there, it's not a fake pretence... and there is a boundary.'
(YOUTH WORKER 11, PROJECT D)

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'There's not one leader in here that I can say a bad word about. They're all so helpful, so warm, they care like. They didn't even have to tell you that they care. They show that they care which is really really important because I know that they're not just doing it because it's their job I know that they're doing it because they want to do it as well - yeah it's changed me.'
(DENISE, PROJECT G)

'Heart of Gold. She would do anything for you. She's amazing, like, it's the only way that I could describe her.
(CATRICIA, PROJECT I)

'Youth Worker 25, she is brilliant. She really really goes out of her way to do so much for us.'
(SHANNON, PROJECT I)

'They gave me a level of support that I can lift the phone no matter what time it was day or night. They were brilliant. I would call in the days that we were off to see them, and they're really worried about me and they still do worry about me and care about me. Whenever someone that you don't know has that level of care and respect for you and cares about you, if you don't show them something back, there's something wrong with you.'
(JIMMY, PROJECT D)

Love and kindness

The concepts of love and kindness have long fallen out of favour within youthwork, but, more recently, are being reclaimed and re-imagined. De St. Croix (2016:59) speaks of the 'infectious emotional attachment' which workers feel for the young people they work with and how workers talked about loving youth work and loving the young people. This is not a peripheral work ethic, but a core value of the youth work profession:

'Caring engagement with young people is intrinsic to the youth work role. When young people demand genuine rather than false or contrived emotional engagement from their youth workers they are expressing a reasonable human desire rather than acting as demanding customers.' (ibid, 2016:65)

Denise from Project G, associates the warmth felt from the workers with the personal change she experiences:

For Catricia and Shannon from Project I, the kindness is almost tangible:

But for Jimmy, the experience of deep kindness was the vehicle through which he learned to show and demonstrate his own kindness for others:

A place of solace

For kindness to have personal impact, it is best supported by constancy. The worker is on a constant journey with the young person where trust in the kindness they experience from workers and moments of practical support help confirm this authentic relationship. Kindness here is not just a woolly concept but illustrated through events and follow-through on a constant basis:

Peace4Youth participants are clear that the role of the workers is in working through issues with them, working up different solutions and devising ways to manage presenting barriers the young people face:

A sense of security is created both by the worker and in the spaces workers create for young people. For some like Lynn (Project E) and Latoya (Project F) this is about breaking the isolation and dullness of being at home. For others they describe how their spaces are made youth-friendly and secure, adding to the sense of solace which projects offer young people:

Neither of these examples are of spaces that are youth-centric in their design. The sense of security which young people feel here is a testament to the fact that secure spaces are not necessarily those that look inviting to others; but offer a home to those who have made it their home. The attributes of safety created by workers are transferred into the physical space by the participants. Jane from Project H describes it thus:

'I would go into the canteen and sit down with these young people or Youth Worker 3 would, or any other worker would. When they see you following through with things and I am very clear; I am here to support you.' (YOUTH WORKER 4, PROJECT C)

'Then I had a falling out with my dad. He kicked me out of the house basically, so I've been sofa surfing since and Youth Worker 3, flipping, got a lot of help from Youth Worker 3 through the housing and stuff like that there. I feel a lot more secure, I'm still sofa surfing but I feel a lot more secure. I feel I have a lot more options and so I feel a lot more secure, started to feel more optimistic about life.' (EL DIABLO, PROJECT B)

'My mummy took sick in maybe October time and I care for her as well as P. So, like, the support Youth Worker 19 and Youth Worker 18 have given me over this past couple of months has been amazing. And even if you need something you just can pick up a phone and ring them. They're brilliant so they are. I'd be lost without Youth Worker 19.' (LATOYA, PROJECT F)

'Youth Worker 15 encouraged me and said that she's going to do it with me [get into the sea]. Everyone was roaring at her. I said 'Nah'. It really helped in the end and I just loved it. Just watching everyone enjoy themselves and myself. I was just playing/splashing about. Very good like.' (KIRSTY, PROJECT F)

'The workers, Youth Worker 5 and Youth Worker 6 they're really real with us and they really connect with us more on, like, as friends. They're not just our leaders. They're friends. So, we can have talks with them. Like if we have a problem or something we're talking to them.' (ROSE, PROJECT C)

'And another thing which was the 'give way' sign which was another thing that Youth Worker 12 helped me out with. Even small problems, like boys or girls stealing boys; and she said that there is nothing, well it's not like there's nothing you can do, but there is nothing that you have to do to stress yourself out. So if something is happening where it is drama, there is no need for stress like. You stand at the side of a road and watch all the cars go by and you don't need to run out and stop them all and you can just give way and let life just go.' (PROJECT D, ANN)

'...Even in our office, some days the sofas were taken over by young people chatting about what's going on and maybe mentoring each other. They are comfortable, and they are opening up. They even call in when they are out walking their dogs. So, I think we have created that space.' (YOUTH WORKER 15, PROJECT F)

'So, Youth Worker 21 was there last night, and we have buckets of young people in this wee tiny room. It's probably the biggest group in the smallest space but we're just doing what we can.' (YOUTH WORKER 20, PROJECT G)

'Like you just felt like you were in a safe place. Like no-one judged you.' (JANE, PROJECT H)

'I ended up talking to Youth Worker 4, I think and said, 'Can I talk to you' and said 'Look, I'm going be homeless and he basically pointed me to Youth Worker 3 as he knows about that. There and then we started meeting up, the one-to-one meetings started.'
(EL DIABLO, PROJECT B)

'It was through the support like, I would rarely do any challenges like hillwalking or kayaking, and they were saying 'what is stopping you from doing it?' and me going 'I don't know' and it was their support. So the mountain was hard for me. I'm not going to sit back and lie, it was hard. A long way from the bottom to the top so it was just being there made me realise 'I have people. It's not just you. I have friends and family.' I actually realise that they're there for me when I need them.'
(GABRIEL JESUS, PROJECT A)

'Yeah. I found it hard getting up [in the morning]. Ummm… But then because they were ringing you that sort of helped you then.'
(GARY, PROJECT C)

'They bring us happiness, just by bringing positive vibes in and making us feel good and letting us know that if we ever are down or if we are ever do feel down, they are there to talk to.'
(SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A)

'He gave me a lot of support and it made me feel a lot more optimistic and stuff.'
(EL DIABLO, PROJECT B)

'It was just Youth Worker 4. He's very outgoing. He just puts everything out there as it is. He kind of encourages you to be yourself.'
(PROJECT B, 1 MILLION STRONG)

Support, challenge and hope

Accompanying is described by Smith (2002:26) as *'a process or relationship that is about one person joining alongside the other, just to be with them.'* Smith questions the depth of this accompanying relationship, but also acknowledges that for her as a young woman, this type of relationship has given her the time and space to explore feelings and make sense of her world.

This type of support is non-specific and non-invasive. The nature of accompanying is that the accompanist is always following the lead of the central character. The support then offered is at the behest and direction of the young person. For El Diablo the support needed was specific and directed:

For other workers, participants faced their own internalised barriers and needed a balance of support and challenge in equal measure from workers:

For other participants hope and optimism were the support that was needed. When individual young people had low hope, then the hope and positivity of workers acted as the counter-balance to move them forward:

Naming it, noticing it

Here, we once again draw on the work of the philosopher Gadamer (1979) who proposes that individuals understand and interpret each situation from their own vantage point; and to remove the self from this process is not fully achievable. Gadamer proposes the concept of 'horizons' to understand how we view the world. With each of us having our own 'horizon of understanding' we have *'a range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point'* (Stanton, McMullan, McConville, 2018:6). As these horizons are distinct from each other Gadamer proposes a 'fusion of horizons' to bring together what is familiar with what is strange, into a new context. Stanton, McMullan and McConville further propose that

'conversation is the medium through which we discover and understand other horizons in relation to our own. Through this we put our own prejudices and understanding to the test and

have opportunities within talking and listening to adjust our own horizons to consider the vantage point of others.' (2018:6)

For Peace4Youth workers, the work is to enable young people to discover their own horizons and to view and encounter the horizons of others. The process of conversation therefore is one of revealing, whereby the young person, in dialogue with the worker, engages in sense-making. The first part of this process is in noticing what is really going on for the group and individual young people:

For this depth of work, the skill of the worker is in noticing and naming that which might be obscured from the young person's view, perhaps because it may be uncomfortable to face:

Youth Worker 1 describes how this sense-making and truth-telling is not only part of the youth work programme content; but is strengthened by the equalising of power between young people and workers. She describes both ideas through the life-shields exercise carried out with the group:

Workers also noticed assets and abilities within the young participants; and the telling of these truths to the young people offered a significant change in their horizons – with this newfound knowledge they engaged in new ways and with new possibilities:

When Kirsty was asked what helped her overcome her anxiety she stated,

For young participants the changing of horizons is a transformational moment. According to NYCI (2018, p.85) *'the key to transformation is committing to empathy and compassion'* which takes time and commitment from both workers and young people. Identifying the shift from one perspective to another is the result of this intense work:

'So, at this point we can see there's something going on. Take a step back. Us being self-aware within us and what's going on within the group.'
(YOUTH WORKER 8, PROJECT C)

'The dynamics are going to be talked about and that, We don't hide stuff so we're not going to have a word quietly. We are always going to say 'this is going on in the group' and we're all adults, we're all over 18, so we can talk about pretty much anything. If it happens in the group, we are going to talk about it in the group. If you're uncomfortable, we're going to talk about you being uncomfortable. We're not dodging it.'
(YOUTH WORKER 11, PROJECT D)

'We don't ask the young people to do anything that we're not prepared to do ourselves. Being a bit vulnerable and sitting round the fire and saying 'you know, this is who I am, this is how I've come here' and not holding anything back in that you know, I think encourages and allows young people to go there themselves. And not for everyone. Sometimes it's too soon. Sometimes it's a bit like 'I don't really know these people and I don't wanna share a whole lot'. So, on our mid-phase residential we picked it up again. We didn't do the exact same format as life shields, but we did make the journey, the river of life.'
(YOUTH WORKER 1, PROJECT A)

'Their feedback to me and Youth Worker 15. We talk to each other and she would give me the feedback and advise me to talk more, encourage me to talk more about it. **(KIRSTY, PROJECT F)**

'And I realised for myself and Youth Worker 24 didn't even know. But he called me aside at the end and said 'I saw what you did there, it was great …. it's what he seen in me'. **(JIMMY CARR, PROJECT H)**

'Whenever we were told about it, we looked around the room and we were like there is no way that any of us – any of us are agreeing with each other. No way like. We are completely different like, all of us, all of us – like the changes ahead is like realising 'God, maybe I have more in common with these people than I actually knew'. **(SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A)**

'Beforehand I would really be a bitter person myself but now I'm different; I treat everybody just as equal. And that came through them. Before I wouldn't have spoken breath [to Catholics] but now, grand.'
(KATIE LEE, PROJECT B)

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'I don't trust very easily. I find it very very hard, so for me to be able to trust them so easily it was really good because I do tend to keep people at arm's length really. And here you can come and be yourself, talk about what you want to talk about, things that have happened that I have never spoken about, that I have spoken to them about.' (DENISE, PROJECT G)

'Oh yeah. Numerous phone calls. Sometimes going and literally picking them up. You know there's a lot of that goes on at that stage where you go - 'look I'm outside your door, just get in the car, come on let's go'. And they will.' (YOUTH WORKER 7, PROJECT C)

'The work in the Hostel is a real challenge and in terms of attendance. But we were persistent, our numbers are not huge, but we kept on going.' (YOUTH WORKER 20, PROJECT G)

'I knew that Youth Worker 12 and Youth Worker 11 were gonna help me if I just.... I couldn't sit on the phone and I couldn't leave the house and then I stopped attending and my mental health just started to plummet and it became really difficult to even explain - how to start a conversation off. But Youth Worker 12 and Youth Worker 11 are able to break down smaller walls instead of a big massive wall; they could break it down slowly and literally all of it is explained and they know how to help and Youth Worker 12 then just message me and send messages to my mum.' (ANN, PROJECT D)

'So, Youth Worker 12 and Youth Worker 11 took time out of their own family life and came down and seen me and brought me down my OCN folder Youth in Government'. (JIMMY, PROJECT D)

'I got discharged on the Monday and I was back to Project D on the Tuesday. Straight back - that there says something; I got straight back to Project D and got stuck in.' (JIMMY, PROJECT D)

Persistent and Relentless

For workers to 'prove' their commitment to the young people they work with, they are tested repeatedly. This testing and proving arises from young people who have a low trust in others due to previous adverse experiences. For the worker, proving their trustworthiness is part of their youth work role:

For youth workers, doing trust work is about consistency and persistence; about follow-through of thought to action; and about the relentless support given to young people. This relates to ideas of constancy previously outlined, but here we describe a more active process. Morgan and McArdle (2018) describe this process with young women as 'repeat and return' whereby the tenacity of the worker is needed to undermine stubborn unhelpful beliefs:

'The practitioners talked of the need for persistence in delivering the same messages consistently in different ways to counteract the centuries-old entrenched cultural messages.' (Morgan & McArdle:309)

This model of work was also prominent in the YouthWorks programme[8] (Youth Council for Northern Ireland, 2013) where youth workers demonstrated patience, tolerance, persistence, resilience and a willingness to overlook minor transgressions and start again. For Peace4Youth, the Model of the 'Relentless youth worker' is apt (Third Sector Capital Partners, 2013), with young people describing youth workers supporting them time and time again. This Intervention model was developed for work with young people inside or on the edges of the justice system and emphasises the relentless approach thus:

'.. a youth worker must relentlessly reconnect with a young person who periodically rejects them and refuses to engage in programming. This pattern is crucial to the process and must happen continuously throughout the relationship.' (Third Sector Capital Partners, 2013:23)

From wake-up calls to bringing young people to the group, workers were tenacious in their approach and dogged when faced with barriers:

Jimmy from Project D describes how the workers visited him during drug rehabilitation:

For Jimmy, this relentless approach is reciprocated when he has the chance to prove himself:

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8   The YouthWorks programme was an employability programme for those young people facing multiple barriers to gaining work. View full document on **https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S_sMjWO2JI7AS-RIp-fdip7tC7wPxX0v7/view**

Benefits and costs of this emotional labour

There can be a cost to this emotional labour. For young people, the relentless approach appears to have merit. For workers, this requires following the young person's lead and this pathway often identifies services or other professions that are unable to meet the needs of the young person. The relentless worker can stray into the territory of other disciplines in an attempt to meet these needs, but with the potential pitfalls of burn-out or compassion fatigue:

This emotional labour is not without skill or cost. De St. Croix (2016:68) describes the emotional range and responses expected of youth workers:

"getting on with' young people who others see as 'difficult' or 'challenging', reaching those who are labelled 'hard to reach', coaxing a smile or a laugh from a teenager who is having a really bad day, remaining calm but assertive when pool cues are thrown, dealing with a smashed window or averting a fight.'

For workers, who show great compassion and relentlessness, young participants can build a fierce dependency which is unsustainable for the worker and potentially unhealthy for participant:

Crucially, for workers, the emotional work and the conscious use of self needs to be carefully managed to have maximum impact for participants and minimum emotional costs for the worker. To do so, the worker builds and uses their ecological intelligence to read their own human ecology and manage their own environment. The conscious use of self for the worker, is therefore a reflective process of self-awareness and a purposeful process of self-management.

'What I've seen in the programme so far by no means just me and Youth Worker 4, we don't back down from stuff. We see stuff through. We've seen one young person who's been involved with mental health who didn't have a CPN [Community Psychiatric Nurse]. We made sure that this CPN is now in place and the young girl that needed support from Women's Aid, that was put into place and the young person that needed support from LGBT organisations, that was put into place.' (YOUTH WORKER 3, PROJECT B)

' We have filled many roles - a councillor, their mummies, daddies, brothers, sisters, friends.' (YOUTH WORKER 2, PROJECT A)

'Housing officers.' (YOUTH WORKER 1, PROJECT A)

'GPs, housing officers, probation officers. You've filled so many roles and sometimes you go, 'where do you draw the line here?'. (YOUTH WORKER 2, PROJECT A)

'Like the past couple of months of my life even though I have my friends I prefer to talk to my tutors, cause even though I have my friends I don't want to bring my friends down. But my tutors understand because they kinda have been in the same boat, because they are older than me so they have been where I am, so they know what I am going through so it's just they are very relatable to and they're better to talk to.' (SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A)

GROUP WORK

Group work is one of the main tools used in delivering the Peace4Youth projects. Establishing a functioning group is an important role for the youth workers. In this section, the complex set of skills required by workers to establish a functioning group is explored and highlighted. The process undertaken by workers and young people affirms the investment in the length and intensity of the programme, or its structure and rationale, and the ultimate outcomes of the programme. This chapter is developed from the ideas explored at a YouthPact training workshop, run by Jarlath Benson with Peace4Youth workers in April 2018.

Conflict and Chaos

The Peace4Youth workers tread an important line between conflict and chaos in their groups. Naturally when working with a group there are differing agendas; impact of individual egos; effect of power dynamics; or conflicting personalities. These things come about because of difference. Workers facilitate the space for difference therefore creating a rich learning space. While the worker or others may consider those in the room, as a 'group' they may not actually share that much in common. Rather there are a multitude of differences.

Where there are differences there is friction. Where there is friction there is fire (chaos). It is not conflict however that stops things happening within the group... it is chaos.

The starting point therefore in working with groups is to acknowledge that you are going to be negotiating differences and managing their coming together. One way that conflict can be managed is by creating a psychological skin or contract around the group.

Making the group a safe place - contracting with a group

Benson (2018) notes that contracting, as he sees it, is more than simply listing ten commandments to a group of young people. Issues such as turning phones off, confidentiality and respect becomes a rhetoric that is all too familiar with young people (and workers) and which they can recite at ease. Rather, Benson notes that contracting with a group is a process of placing a protective skin around the group. This protective skin comprises of three elements - purpose; choice to be here; and taking care of self.

Purpose – Firstly it is imperative that individuals have a clear understanding of the purpose of the group; knowing both what the group will and will not do. Young people need to be clear as to why they are part of this group and the purpose of it. It's important that young people are aware of this and the limits of the group work setting.

Should a young person have greater or different expectations of the group then this will not only become a problem for this young person but for all members of the group. That said however, while there is an explicit purpose for why the group are meeting together there are differences in individual motivation to be there. Caution too must be exercised to ensure that the worker does not fall into the trap of straying into areas that the group was not intended for to cater to individual needs.

This has been challenging for workers in the programme, however workers describe how they strike the balance when working with young people who have many and varied needs [see Co-design for examples].

Choice to be here – Benson highlights that while those who have been referred to a particular group (conscripts) may not have a choice with regards to leaving the group, he states that they do have a choice to make about being mentally present within the group; differentiating between simply having people present and having 'their hearts and souls'. While it may appear that those who attend the group voluntarily (volunteers) can exercise greater agency regarding physically attending the group, they too must choose to be mentally present.

Take care of yourself – It is important to emphasise to group members the importance of taking care of themselves. This is done by being mindful of what they say or do not say in the group setting and that they, rather than the worker, takes responsibility for this. Benson goes on to state that as individuals look after themselves, in turn they will begin to look after the welfare of the group. He cautions that the more responsibility that the worker takes, the less the group take. And while young people may expect the adult in the group to be the traditional voice of authority, fulfilling this role does little to foster individual responsibility. Rather engaging people at the level of will or agency means that they are not simply passive agents who are acted upon but rather are active agents in their own lives.

Contracting, using these three concepts, moves beyond a simple first night, word storming activity, to an on-going process of attending to a group that runs for the life of the group. The concern of the worker is not simply to wrap the group in this protective skin but attend to the maintenance of it and its boundaries. Here the focus is on identifying those 'fractures', 'deviations', interruptions and disturbances that threaten to break the skin (contract). Benson states that in attending to these fissures the worker 'helps the group become a group.'

One way that the group experiences interruption is through individual emotions/conflict (chaos). At the point of chaos, the task of the worker is to stop and engage the group around this breach in contract, as threats to the integrity to the group contract, alienates people and marginalises their experiences. He goes on to warn however that there is an 'art' in intervening at the point of disturbance – e.g. if you intervene too much the group does not become attractive to its members and if it is not attractive to its members they will not commit to attending. Rather than necessarily 'calling each' disturbance as it surfaces he talks about seeing these over the life cycle of the group, balancing intervention to specific periods (e.g. beginning, middle and end stages). Addressing issues over the life of the group is grounded in the belief that a group isn't born at its first meeting (and therefore all issues must be dealt with immediately) but rather that the group is something that develops over time (allowing issues to be 'parked' and addressed later).

The core activities of a group

In the YouthPact training session with Jarlath Benson, core processes for working with groups were identified and explored. These groupwork elements are evident across the Peace4Youth programmes, projects and thematic outcome areas:

- **Empowering** – giving people a sense of their capacity - what they can contribute.

- **Bonding** – weaving, linking, including, bridging.

- **Managing transitions** - beginnings and endings (of sessions and programmes).

- **Knowing your group** – attuned to, tune into what the group needs. Empathic connection with the group.

- **Educating** – providing an experience where people can learn.

- **Facilitating** – controlling the ebb and flow of the group.

- **Monitoring (mirroring)** - showing young people how they have progressed.

- **Evocation** – drawing out, calling out what's within the person.

Resistance to being a member of group

As stated previously the act of bringing people together in itself does not make a group and there are some young people who have resisted being part of the programme. Some express this in behaviour that isolates them, that causes disruption for others and poses questions for the worker.

In considering why some individuals embrace the group context while others resist, one must consider those previous group experiences that have shaped their understanding of being a member of a group. For some, previous group engagements (such as family group, peer group, and work group) have been friendly, supportive opportunities while for others these have been dreadful, frightening encounters.

It is these previous experiences of groups that shape an individual's behaviour in your group. For example, the young person who is being very loud might be the person who is frightened. How they avoid joining the group (a place they are threatened) is to set themselves apart as an alpha. Group and individual conflict and resistance may be based on their understanding of the group as a frightening place:

A place of contamination or contagion The group can be viewed as a place of contamination and contagion on both a social and a personal level. Here individuals may fear that they will be labelled as a result of being part of this group (social). Or that particular issues they have will become exaggerated when surrounded by others with similar issues (personal). The group worker may also feel responsible, bringing together people who may exacerbate the difficulties that some members face.

Fear of being flooded by feelings Some resist the group experience because they are fearful that it may stir up unwelcomed feelings and they may not be able to contain or deal with these.

Fear of being engulfed by others In order to be a part of a group an individual is required to surrender a part of themselves in order to get along with the collective. For some, however, they give up so much of themselves in order to get along that they become engulfed by the group.

Fear of being named and shamed The group experience is different from the one to one encounter. In the group you might be individually 'called out' on an issue, view or behaviour and that others will witness this.

Fear of disclosure Some individuals resist the group because they anticipate that they will be asked to disclose aspects of themselves that have wish to remain private.

Fear of intimacy Often intimacy has been a dangerous thing for many of those that we are working with. As workers we may also be nervous, even fearful, of creating an intimate space.

Fear of conflict For some the group represents a place where conflict is likely to arise and where avoiding or escaping this is difficult.

Conversely, the other side of the group work experience offered participants a supportive and friendly place:

Normalising and normative Addressing issues within the group setting can allow individuals to recognise that others are facing similar experiences and issues and that these are 'normal' rather than specific to them.

Generate feelings Often the feelings of young people are repressed or prohibited ('don't get angry', 'don't cry', 'don't get so excited' etc.) by various adults and institutions. As such, young people can struggle at times to manage or express their feelings - the group, however, can be a space that welcomes and works with feelings.

Opportunity for peer feedback, support, relief and comparison The group can be a supportive place wherein space is created for individuals to receive advice, affirmation and feedback from their peers. The group environment also allows individuals to compare themselves to others - imitating or avoiding the successful and unsuccessful behaviours of other group members.

'It's like sharing the road with others – it's like sharing the path with people who are going through the same things – like people going through the same course or people even if they are on a different course, they are still on the same path as me. I know how to share the road with them and whenever we have been with the other groups we've always shared our parts with them and they've shared their parts with us – they know how to share, we know how to share.'
(SNOWFLAKE, PROJECT A)

'If someone asked me, my name is Jane, like I can say it perfectly now. But it's kind of you know when you're just put on the spot and I kinda... You know I was kinda like sh, sh, and it just wouldn't come out. And it was so nice that you know no-one laughed or no-one was kind of like 'oh she forgot her name or can she not'... And it's not that... Like I can speak. It's just it's like a block nearly.'
(JANE, PROJECT H)

'And I was really nervous and my legs wouldn't stop jiggling. It was proper pins and needles and we had a group discussion sitting in a circle and we did the same thing where we opened up to each other. So we kept our group contract which we do at the start of the year which is about respecting each other and if we have any issues we bring it up in group and this is what 'sharing the road' was for, because I had kind of let go of that thought that everyone else was going through something at the exact same time but it was just separate and that we were all on the same boat and I kind of, it was like inspiring for other people who could have been going through something much worse than me and they were showing up, still showing up to Project D and still doing stuff. So for me it was like 'well if they can do it, then I can do it' and that for me was sharing the road; sharing the space and sharing the fact that we all had something going on. We were all being helped and guided onto a better pathway.'
(ANN, PROJECT D)

'I believe if you overcome your fears everyone would be a superstar. Our group is like this in helping you overcome your fears.'
(KIRSTY, PROJECT F)

'But never dodging it. It's a thing of 'it's not done until everybody agrees it's done,' so they know that if that's there, the dynamics are going to be talked about and that we don't hide stuff .... We're not dodging it. There's been a couple of stages where there has been one girl has been upset a few times and she escapes into her phone and I've said that's not ok; and if you go into your phone I'm going to talk to you about being in your phone that breaks the contact with us.' (Youth WORKER 11, PROJECT D)

'In the youth-led stage Snowflake was one of the ones who was straight up there, you know as one of the leaders. And she's in the group chat, 'guys we need to be in for half 9 tomorrow', 'guys the bus is leaving at this time, nobody be late please'. You know and that actually caused some conflict along the way as you can imagine, 'who are you telling us what to do?'. 'Well I'm part of this group and you're part of this group and we need to do this together' and working that all out.'
(YOUTH WORKER ONE, PROJECT A)

Making the group your co-worker

The group grows by what it can share and what it can share is what it can talk about and what it can talk about is its experience (Benson, 2018).

Rather than taking full and exclusive responsibility for the group Benson encourages a habit of making the group your co-worker. He warns about forcing a group into discussion or activity in order to fill spaces, in order to avoid embarrassing silences, by 'filing in' you may miss an opportunity to focus on what is really bothering people. Removing people from the group situation can also remove the opportunity for experience and growth and denies the group the opportunity to work as co-workers.

Here, Youth Worker 11 describes a process that has taken place in their group:

Making the group your co-worker does not undermine the role you have in the group, it merely recognises the potential for group members to take individual and collective responsibility. However, this process can cause conflict among those vying for power and leadership roles:

The group work experience continues to be a powerful and influential tool when working with young people. According to Clarke et al. (1993:47) as members of subcultures young people:

'*Explore 'focal concerns' central to the inner life of the group: things 'always done' or 'never done', (and engage in) a set of social rituals which under-pin their collective identity and define them as a 'group' instead of a collection of individuals.'*

In this safe environment they find allies, are motivated, praised, challenged, confronted and share experiences with their peers. Acknowledging the agency of the individual, in affecting personal change, the group provides opportunities for learning, development and personal growth. The task and process go hand in hand; we cannot have one without the other.

INSIGHTS FROM PEACE4YOUTH PRACTICE STUDIES

- **The relationship between the youth worker and the young person is both an intervention and a vehicle towards change.** Having a positive adult relationship offers **a social connection necessary for human flourishing**. A positive relationship also offers security, support, challenge and fun. **These qualities in a relationship enable growth to take place**.

- **The young person is given time.** With time, young people grow in commitment to the programme, the workers and their own development. With time, they begin to see changes in themselves as a result of taking part, building confidence that all the parts of the process are working properly.

- *Reflection is at the core of activity.* Activity of itself is limited; but breadth of activity coupled with intentionality can lead to real opportunities for change.

- *Routine and boundaries* is not of initial interest to young people but as the programme evolves the participants appreciate these boundaries. They develop expectations of the youth worker; they develop expectations of self and others.

- *Repetitive activity by the worker,* whether big or small has the capacity for changing deeply engrained attitudes and behaviours. With time, these repetitions and challenges to individual speech or behaviours can take effect.

- Where the **community relations work becomes less about the history of the troubles,** the material and resources can become more engaging for young people and more in tune with their lives e.g. exercises on identity, Brexit, values, diversity, inclusion, life in my community. A contemporary approach to community relations is creating opportunitites for the development of meaning relationships.

- Maturation of our ability to deal with conflict within groups means that where historically the emphasis of contact work was on identifying common ground, there is currently **capacity to discover diversity and examine difference.** Work on common ground can be a starting point, but the practice has moved beyond this, at times led by the young people, who have widened their horizons.

- *Workers work with emotions;* and where they can hear and hold the expression of frustrations, anger, hope, excitement and ambivalence, there are real opportunities for transformation. This programme is less a collection of activities and curriculum, but is true experiential learning; working with what you have got, reflecting on it and working with and through emotions. To do this well, there needs to be a recognition of the **emotional labour involved;** and support for reflective and support systems.

- *Kindness, care and love is the language* used by participants to describe the workers. This points to a much more therapeutic relationship that is intentional, purposeful, dynamic and transformative.

- The element of *citizenship* in the programme looks to the outside eye like lots of community activity; but the essential experience and outcome for young people was *in belonging.* Feeling like you belong somewhere, being confident enough to contribute and courageous enough to shape your society are all worked out in the day-to-day programme.

- The building blocks for **citizenship and co-design is in young people finding and using their voice**. This begins in the groups, where they find their voice, and extends to community and family where they use their voice. They see themselves as valued, wanted and useful. Youth workers enable this process through displaying an intrinsic value of regarding young people as an asset to and within society.

- Where young people are supported to become **co-investigators alongside youth workers** on specific themes or issues, they **develop critical thinking skills and ignite curiosity.**

- **Kinaesthetic models of learning,** such as visiting interface divisions and wall murals, can provoke new and additional perspectives which provide a more informed understanding of the conflict.

- The **dignity of being able to contribute to others is part of a transformative experience** for young people, building their sense of value to and within the world.

- The worker not only uses their skills in the practice, but **consciously uses their authentic self** to build a relationship that is constant and trusted. **Consistency** is how the worker builds trust. **Persistence and tenacity** are how the worker challenges mistrust, obstacles and resistance.

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APPENDIX ONE

Title   **Highways (Pathway to Change)**

Size of Group   One to One with a young person or two/three young people maximum.

Purpose

To support young people and the youth worker to explore, understand and articulate their learning and experience in the Peace4Youth programme.

Duration   40mins -60mins

Materials

· A quiet space that will be uninterrupted.

· A large (A1ish) piece of Card or Flip Chart page

· Markers

· Glue

· Highway Cards

Instructions

Set the room up in advance with the cards, paper and markers. Give each young person approx. 20 minutes to create their Highways Map. Use your own judgment as to how much guidance/intervention to make when the young person is working on their highways.

Give each young person a set of the highways cards and ask them to think about their experience on the programme – use the cards to create a map that describes the experience considering:

What attracted you to the project?

· How did you hear about it?

· Did anyone encourage or support you to get involved with it?

· What was it that caught your interest and made you think you'd give it a try?

· What were you doing at the time the chance to join the project came up?

· What did you want to get out of your involvement?

What did you take part and engage in during the project?

· Summarise the activities, courses and other pieces of work you have participated in.

· It might be helpful to think about the different stages of your involvement with the project and list what you have taken part in to date, for example, what did you do in the early weeks, was there a residential, when did you do your first course, etc.

What helped you stay involved?

· Maybe you remained involved because of the welcoming nature of the organisation and its workers, the interest they showed in you personally, the one-to-one support they provided or the help with your personal circumstances?

· Perhaps it was because you got support with costs (incentive payments, childcare, travel expenses, food & refreshments). Or was it the length of the project, the routine it gave you and its flexibility?

· Or it could be because you have been given responsibility, contributed to the project design and you want to develop leadership skills and/or give something back?

What difference did taking part make to you?

· Think about the difference the programme made for you - not just what is obvious to others but what you know in yourself.

And finally...

Remind the young people that the Highways will be shared with the 2 workers from their project who are taking part in the practice studies. Ask the young people to identify approximately 3 areas of their Highway that they want to draw particular attention to or would like the workers to elaborate on.

The researcher will carry out a one to one recorded interview with the young person following their work on their highways.

Handouts   Highways cards

Tips for facilitator

Use your own judgement regarding the amount of intervention you make when the young person is creating their Highways Map.

The questions are repetitive – reword, rephrase as you see fit.

The Highways Map is only an aid to conversation and exploration. If the young person is not interested in using this format don't use it.

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