

# Youth Work & The Impact It has on Society from a Service Providers Point of View.

Niamh Smith (1596498), Supervisor Name: Annette Jorgensen

## Abstract

This project sought to gain an insight into the area of youth work and establish the impact it has on society from a service provider's point of view. Data was collected using a method of semi structured interviews. The main aim of this report was to gain an insight into the youth work world and understand the value of youth work, the perceptions of young people, recognition of youth work and the impact it has on the local community.

## Introduction

This chapter will comprise of an in-depth study on Youth work and the impact it has on the community from a service provider's point of view by reviewing a number of published pieces of literature.



Jenkinson (2000) addressed the issue of Youth Work in Ireland and the struggle to find its own identity. In the past Youth Work was seen as a proactive approach to the growing problem of Youth unemployment in Ireland. In 1942, a call for youth facilities for unemployed individuals was demanded by the Department of Education, as the situation of idle youth was in "grave danger" of evolving, and immediate action was required before "further deterioration of character and an increase in undisciplined conduct" was seen as the norm in the youth of Irish Society (Lalor, de Roiste and Devlin. 2007: p.271).



## Methods

The researcher chose a qualitative approach for this research project as 'qualitative research, as contrast with quantitative studies, places more emphasis on the study of the phenomena from the perspective of the insider'. (Lapna, Quartaroli and Riemer 2012: p. 3) A qualitative research method was the appropriate approach for this research as it is data led and it is based around an 'inductive process' which allows the researcher to gain an in-depth insight into the subject matter through the views and understandings of participants involved. The researcher's main aim was to gain a superior understanding of youth work in today's society from the point of view of service providers. A quantitative approach to this research would not be a suitable style of research as it is based on a very statistical form of analysis formulated through numerical data. (Muijs 2011: p.1)

## Materials

An interview schedule was constructed with eight semi structured questions, with scope to elaborate into other relevant areas. The main aim of the interview schedule was to gain an insight into the organisation, the impact of the organisation and also the perceptions of young people in today's society. An Olympus VN-750 Digital Voice Recorder was used to record each interview. The transcription of each interview was done so on a Toshiba Equium Laptop and QSR Nivo 10 was used to code and analyse data.

## Results

The main focus of this research was to understand participant's views on youth work and the impact it has on the community and society in general. This was accomplished by conducting six in-depth interviews. A thematic analysis of data collected revealed six main themes, Youth Development, Relationship Dynamics, Listening to young people, Perceptions of young people, The impact on the community and The struggle for recognition in the youth work sector.

## Discussion

The participants of this study showed an informed and suggestive view on this issue. The value of youth work in today's society is much more important than ever before, the majority of participants agreed to a certain extent that youth work is valued more so now, since recession had hit and the doom and gloom of the future economy does not hold much light for the future, we need to be encouraging our youth for the future and lead them in a positive path. The need for recognition for the work youth work does in the lives of young people and also within the community is vital however the Government needs to step up and appreciate how such work affects society. This report has signified a lack of support and assistance from the government which needs to be addressed.

## References

- Lapan, S. D., Quartaroli, M. T. and Reimer, F. J. (2012). *Qualitative Research. An Introduction to Methods and Design*. Published by Jossey-Bass. A Wiley Imprint.
- Lalor, K., deRoiste, A., & Devlin, M. (2007) *Young People in Contemporary Ireland*. Gill & Macmillan Ltd. Ireland.
- Merton et al. (2004). *An Evaluation of the Impact of Youth Work in England*. Department of Education and Skills. De Montfort Expertise Ltd.