Strengthening the potential of youth work in Eastern Europe

Peer Learning Event – Tiblisi
Why & Where?

Maynooth University
National University of Ireland Maynooth

CENTRE FOR
YOUTH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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#youthworkchangeslives   #itdepends

Words from the wise …

Some Youth Work 'givens'

- Concerned with personal, social and societal development → social and just Europe

- Starts with young people's needs, interests, ideas and experiences – how do we know?

- Empowering and engaging processes – young people's active voluntary* participation in all aspects of that process

- Informal and non-formal learning (knowledge. skills, values and attitudes) → Dialogical & Educational

- Accessible, open, flexible (CM/Rec(2017)4

An Educational Purpose

- Dual purpose of education: 'to prepare people to live well in a world worth living in'

- Education must be conducted in ways that model and foster the 'good life' for humankind—what it means to live well in a world worth living in (Kemmis, 2014).

- Never neutral or automatically benign

Lest we forget

Acknowledges the '**positive contribution of youth workers** in all member States to:
empowering* and
engaging young people in developing
inclusive democratic and peaceful societies'
(CM/Rec(2017)4

BIG ASK of YOUTH WORKERS & A BIGGER PROMISE TO YOUNG PEOPLE!

→ Key role for educations and training frameworks

How do we do that?

Is where important?

- Youth Clubs
- Youth Centres (drop in/scheduled)
- After-school non-formal learning
- Residential Centres
- Online/digital youth work
- Mobile youth work
- Detached/street work etc. etc.

Where are young people?

Who are young people?

Why & How → Where?

- Clarity of Intention (empowerment, dialogical, young-person centred etc.)

- Values in Action

- Forms & Tools that engage & connect with young people

- Awareness of Power
  - Boundaries
  - Limits
  - Opportunities to Challenge/Stretch

Identify the opportunities for 'youth work' rather than working with young people for other social/personal/recreational purposes?

Activity is not the purpose → medium of engagement in 'service of purpose'

Some examples from Ireland

- Work in progress ….

- Product of history, culture, politics, context etc

- Process of formation and reformation

- Dynamic interplay between 'actors'

- Think about 'informing principles'

Origins of Irish Youth Work

YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

are active in almost **every community** reaching over

383,000 YOUNG PEOPLE

Extent of Volunteering and Paid Employment in the Youth Work Sector in Ireland – 2012

40,145 **Number of Volunteers**

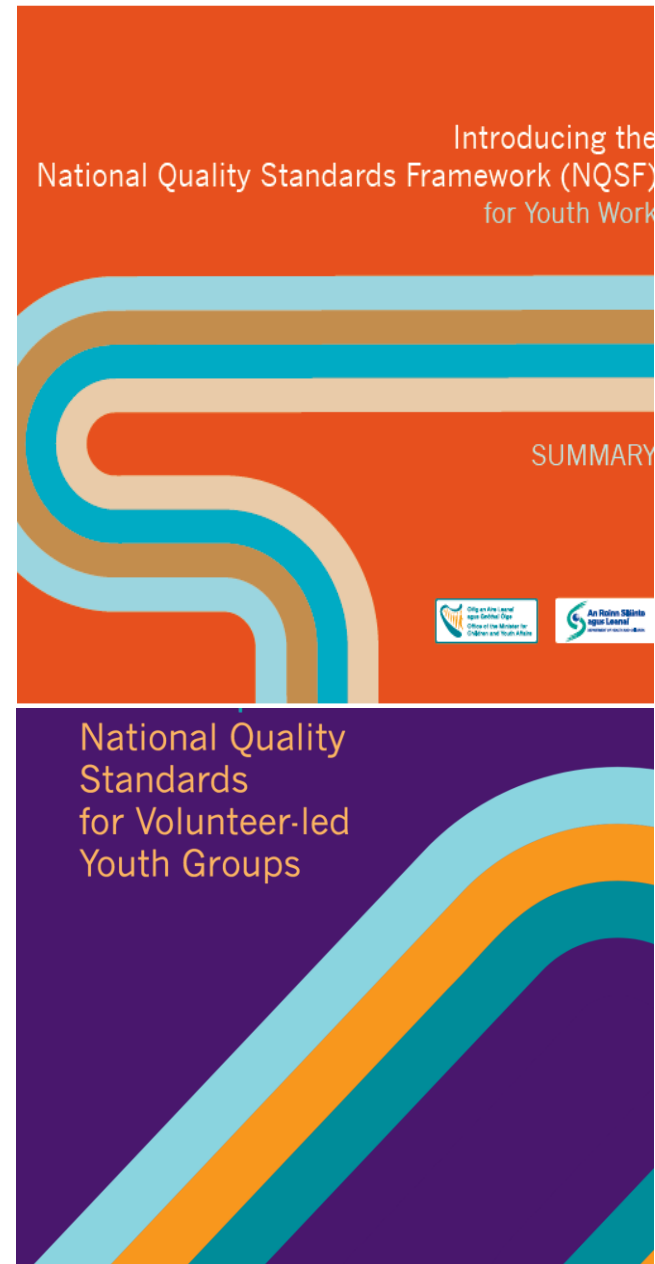1,397 **Number of Persons in Paid Employment** *(Full-Time Equivalents)*

Source: Indecon analysis

National Quality Standards Framework, 2010

Staffed & Voluntary Organisations Quality Provision

Principles

1. Young person-centred: rights - active and voluntary participation*

2. Committed to safety and well-being of young people*

3. Educational and developmental*

4. Equality and inclusiveness

5. Quality youth work

Introducing the
National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF)
for Youth Work

SUMMARY

National Quality Standards
for Volunteer-led Youth Groups

Ireland Five Areas of Professional Ability

A. Facilitate the **personal, social and political education** and development of young people

B. Promote **equality and change** in the interests and welfare of young people and communities and **uphold the value base** of youth work and community work

C. Work with young people, with communities and with peers and partners, **build and sustain empowering relationships**

D. Develop youth work **work strategy and practice**

E. **Manage** their own work and **lead and manage** the work of teams and individuals

Professional Youth Work Education & Training Programmes @ MU

BSocSc Community and Youth Work [BCYW]

- ❑ 3 years full-time/4 years part-time Level 8 Honours degree [Level 7 EQF] 225 ECTS

MSocSc Community and Youth Work [MCYW]

- ❑ 2 years full-time/3 years part-time Level 9 post-graduate degree [Level 8 EQF] 120 ECTS

- ❑ **Central to both are - Fieldwork Placement** full ECTS alongside full academic ECTS

Partnership CPD Programmes
(20 ECTS L6 & 7 EQF)

- Youth Work Studies

- Digital Creativity in Youth Settings

- Youth Arts Practice

- Development Education/Global Youth Work

- Youth Justice

- E+ Youth Mobility Project Management

- Leadership, Management & Organisation

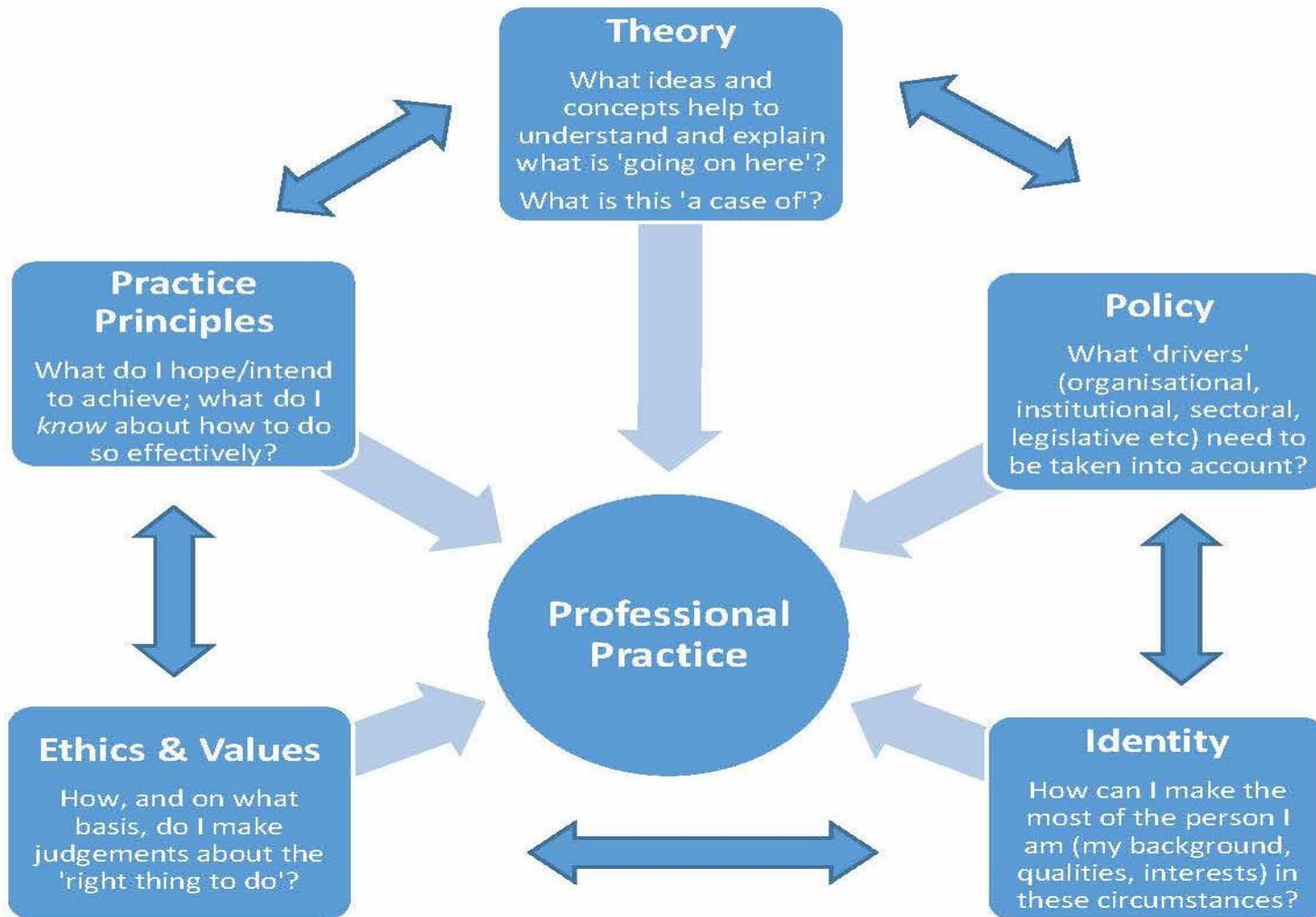- Supervision in Social Professions*

Curriculum Integration

Two key ideas underpin programme design:

1. Idea of bringing traditional knowledge disciplines together in the service of fundamental and important problems and questions.

2. Unity of Purpose → lens of youth work practice → social constructivist philosophy

Integrative professional practice

Practising as a professional requires a comprehensive grasp of the relevance/influence of each of the five dimensions below (the list is not exhaustive) and of the *inter-relationships* between them.

Theory
What ideas and concepts help to understand and explain what is 'going on here'?
What is this 'a case of'?

Practice Principles
What do I hope/intend to achieve; what do I *know* about how to do so effectively?

Policy
What 'drivers' (organisational, institutional, sectoral, legislative etc) need to be taken into account?

Professional Practice

Ethics & Values
How, and on what basis, do I make judgements about the 'right thing to do'?

Identity
How can I make the most of the person I am (my background, qualities, interests) in these circumstances?

Maurice Devlin & Hilary Tierney 2018

Curriculum Focus

- Process of **Professional Formation** – academic excellence and practice competence have equal value.

- **Social Science** Foundation - Disciplines of Sociology, Psychology, Management etc.

- Underpinned by **explicit Equality and Human Rights** focus

- **Theory, policy and practice** of youth work

- **Block supervised fieldwork placement** (14 weeks full-time) in each year of the programme.

Professional Endorsement

- Professional endorsement **represents a formal recognition by the youth work sector** that specific qualifications, awards or programmes have reached a minimum standard or met prescribed criteria

- It is **distinct from academic validation** which is conferred by higher educational institutions themselves or other relevant qualification authorities… 5 year cycle.

- Purpose of professional education and training is to enable practitioners to **develop a strong sense of their own professional identity**, enabling them to **engage critically** with a variety of **policy contexts and with complex fields of accountability**

Sources & Resources

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Maynooth University Department of Applied Social Studies

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/applied-social-studies

North-South Education and Training Committee [NSETS]

https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/

NSETS Endorsement Criteria

https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NSETS-Professional-Endorsement-Criteria.pdf

YouthWordAndYou. https://www.youthworkandyou.org