

Introduction

Youth work is an essential component of community development yet over the years many feel that it has been undermined and undervalued. The opportunity to respond to this consultation is gratefully received and one can only hope that the views from all organisations, youths and individuals will be taken on board with great importance in order to affect the much needed change.

As Chinese Community Development Partnership – Youth Project works with Chinese young people aged 12-25 years, our response will be based from this viewpoint and also in a more general viewpoint.

Q1 Should it always be for a young person to decide whether they want to take part in a youth work activity?

Yes, we should be allowing them to exercise their right to freedom of choice but if they choose not to then we, as public servants are not doing our jobs. We have to be able to come up with a youth work activity/programme that captures what they are looking for and at the same time achieving targets/goals.

Q2 Do you have any examples to share of good youth work?

No. As it needs to be in place permanently to see change and no youth work has that due to funding etc.

Q3 To what extent should youth work opportunities be generally available to all young people, or be targeted at those who are particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged?

If youth work opportunities are being addressed on general terms then it should be made available to all youths. The key here is that the opportunities are available to everyone and it is their choices as to whether or not they take it up. However, those who are particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged are those that tend to be less likely to take up the available opportunities, therefore more work needs to be carried out in order to reach these groups and deliver the message.

Q4 To what extent will different types of youth work or youth organisations require different treatment in the National Youth Work Strategy?

Youth work or youth organisations in deprived/rural areas and those working with special interest groups as well as those working with ethnic minority groups should receive different treatment in the National Youth Work Strategy.

Q5 How do we attract and retain more volunteers to help deliver youth work opportunities?

With regards to attracting volunteers to help deliver youth work opportunities, it is suggested that the Executive work with career service in each university/college to promote youth work with voluntary or statutory organisations, promote opportunities through job fair and through work placement, or launch the Volunteer Recruitment Scheme around the year. Probably, the Executive can give more practical incentives and provide monies to sustain those that train, support and advise volunteers.

Volunteer works needs to be seen by employers as a valued learning experience, need re-education of volunteering. "Volunteer Central Network Scotland" should get some form of recognition, e.g. certificate after so many hours etc.

Q6 How can better links be forged with schools and other providers to improve the opportunities available to young people?

In terms of forging better links with schools and other providers to improve the opportunities available to young people, it is recommended that they need to have dialogue and a good communication network with one another. Young people should be encouraged to volunteer/work within community and be supported.

Q7 What particular skills can youth work bring to work within or around schools, especially to keep young people engaged?

Youth workers' particular skills are that they have established a "working" relationship with their service users – they have mutual respect for each other and are able to work with youths to achieve goals/outcomes. Therefore, within a school setting they would be able to engage and encourage a wide number of children and young people to work together.

Q8 What type of support is needed at national level to improve opportunities and outcomes for young people at a local level?

Funding availability at national level needs to be improved and more readily available to local level youth work or youth organisation, this is key in improving opportunities and outcomes for young people at a local level. Equality network on a national level would benefit staff, sessional/voluntary workers and also the opportunities to link in with each other on a national level would also improve opportunities and outcomes by giving youths a greater sense of belonging. National level support would also be needed from schools to support their local youths and youth projects.

Q9 Do you have any views on how YouthLink Scotland can best support and represent the range of youth work providers?

YouthLink Scotland should:

- **Regularly update on policies and news about youth work development**
- **Produce induction toolkits or guides on how to carry out youth work at local or organisational level**
- **Provide resources or opportunities of funding with voluntary organisations so as to sustain youth work development**
- **Collaborate with other youth work agencies/providers across the UK or across the world**
- **Involve all major agencies – social services, education, health, the voluntary sector as well as the statutory sector to make sure that youth service provision is accessible, well coordinated and integrated with community services**
- **Youth workers, volunteers, sessional workers, health visitors, social workers – need greater training opportunities in how to understand and identify problems and when to seek further help**

Q10 How can we help national youth work organisations to work more with each other to share good practice, build capacity and make best use of their resources?

- **Form a strategic alliance or establish a central governing body to improve the partnership work amongst them.**
- **In terms of geographical boundary, it is suggested that representative centralised body/sector should be established in order to share good practice, build capacity and make best use of their resources.**
- **Regular gathering/meeting, annual event for that allows everyone opportunity to share good practice and serves as networking with each other.**
- **National training aimed at youth organisations' workers in order to build capacity.**

Q11 What can be done to improve the information available to young people and their ability to access it?

The information should use appropriate language. Given the numbers of accessing Internet, it is better to provide web-based information. Having said that, not all young people have access to the web, the information available to young people can be transmitted through text message via mobile phone setting. The information should be distributed to the venues/places where most young people hang around. Service hours of youth work provision ought to be flexible and suitable to young people. In order to increase their ability to access it, it is recommended to have free entry to most of the activities/events.

Q12 How can young people be more involved in developing information for other young people?

- A. To form a steering group which is made up of young people**
- B. Young people should be invited to take part in consultation papers that relate to their issues.**
- C. Setting should be less formal and welcoming (e.g. youth café)**
- D. Online community (e.g. BeBo, You Tube, My Space, etc) allows youths to get involved in developing information and even to even encourage more young people to greater participation.**

Q13 What do you think are the priorities for youth work in the 21st century?

The reduction in the number of marginalised and excluded youths is the first priority for youth work in the 21st century.

Apart from that, national youth work provision should form inter-country youth collaboration to learn different countries' models of youth work. Moreover, the skills of youth workers in engaging with young people and enabling them to get their voices heard and to influence service provision can make a big contribution to improve youth work in the 21st century. Therefore, appropriate funding and training is needed for youth workers.

Q14 How do we make sure that youth work is accessible to all young people, including equality groups and those in rural areas, and respects their differences?

- National monitor system – that includes equal opportunity**
- Work together with ethnic minority communities, regional councils and regeneration area, in particular deprived or rural areas to deliver youth work**
- If necessary, National Youth Provision should provide financial support with these projects.**

Q15 How can youth work contribute to good community relations?

Youth work is the cornerstone of basic community work because youth work can inspire more youths to get involved in the local community, e.g. volunteers or sessional workers in aspects of community work so that community can receive good volume of human capital to work together towards better community. In turn, the profile of each community can be raised through active youth participation.

Q16 What particular issues and barriers do young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled young people, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) young people encounter in accessing youth work opportunities?

- ***Non-equal opportunities***
- ***Racial stereotyping***
- ***Racism***
- ***Negative attitudes***
- ***Homophobia***
- ***Ignorance of other cultures and insensitivity to their needs***
- ***Excluding practices***

Q17 Are there any gender issues or other issues affecting equality groups that we need to consider?

Gender issues are important in certain religious groups and it is essential that sensitivity be adopted when addressing this issue and care to involve them in the best possible way.

Cultural issues in some BME groups – need to be aware of them as it can affect youth work.

Q18 What can be done to provide the right kind of opportunities for young people of school age?

There needs to be a link and provision of services with schools and youth work/club/activities in order to ensure that every opportunity is given to young people.

Q19 And what can be done to provide the right kind of opportunities for young people who have left school?

- ***Various means of information exposure, such as: web-based (electronic marketing or viral marketing), mobile phone setting, television, radio, banners, job fair, etc to inspire young people to get involved***
- ***Work together with private and public sectors***

Q20 How do we make sure that partnership and youth work providers are focused on delivering better outcomes for young people at a local level?

A national framework is needed with measurable objectives/milestones, these can then be monitored by youth work providers to ensure that better outcomes are being delivered. One of the key factors here though, is that youth work must be recognised and supported in all these decision making processes.

Q21 What more can be done to enable all youth work providers to engage in and influence local networks and partnerships, including the community planning framework?

Local networks and partnerships should form the partnership committee which is made up all youth work providers so that youth work providers can have regular meeting on formation of policy and comment on the national youth work development.

On a most basic level, dialogue between each other and communication needs to be opened dramatically to enable youth work providers to engage in local networks.

Q22 How can youth organisations expand the numbers of young people they deal with?

To involve young people in their planning stages of activities/events and give young people more choice. This leads to more sense of responsibility within themselves and gives them freedom for personal development. It also shows that their opinions are valued and that they are being heard.

Q23 What steps can be taken to make best use of buildings and facilities to deliver youth work opportunities?

Youth centre provision is essential to deliver youth work opportunities and to create a sense of belonging within a safe environment. Youth centre/club is also a good way to involve the community and vice versa – establish better links and youths can start their own projects to support each other.

Q24 What more can be done at national, local and organisational levels to make sure that young people can participate in decisions that affect them?

National Levels

- ***Scottish Executive, YouthLink Scotland, Communities Scotland or other national bodies should invite a number of youth representatives who were selected from local levels to attend the decision making meetings.***
- ***Youth worker often act as an advocate for a young person. It is suggested that any paper or policy relevant to youth work should be access not only electronically but also distributed in written form to youth workers to ensure that young people can participate in decisions that affect them.***

Local Levels

- ***Arranging more work placement targeted at young people who are willing to engage more young people locally***

Organisational Levels

- ***Providing more training with paid or volunteer youth workers to build their capacity so that they can participate in decisions that affect young people***
- ***Youth related projects can do outreach work to encourage youths to have their voices heard.***

Q25 What more can be done at local or national level to support the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) to engage with and represent young people in Scotland?

The members of SYP should meet local youth clubs or organisations regularly (e.g. every six weeks) to collect ideas/thoughts, collate them and report to the Scottish Youth Parliament. Need a more pro-active approach to ensure youth involvement, to “tune-in” to issues that are important to them and to help them develop an understanding of how they can be tackled/dealt with.

Q26 Are you getting enough support with self-evaluation and with identifying and measuring outcomes and impacts? If not, what would help?

From time to time, support is not enough with self-evaluation and with identifying and measuring outcomes and impacts. In terms of evaluation and measuring tools, relevant workers should receive training on project measurement tools. Not only training but continued support on the above is also needed.

Q27 How can youth workers work more closely with others (for example, health workers) to make sure that young people's needs are identified and met?

Youth workers should participate in more consultations, conferences or network meeting so as to expand the scope of involvement. Youth committee should be made of a number of partners (e.g. health workers, career workers, community workers) to work on the issues which young people encounter so as to ensure that young people's needs are identified and met.

Q28 How do we make sure that young people receive recognition for informal learning?

- ***Certificates as “proof” so that they can show employers.***
- ***On the other hand, employers need to recognise the informal learning that has been undertaken.***
- ***Increase youths access to careers***
- ***Youth work needs funding secured for continuity in order to support young people and informal learning.***

Q29 How do we make sure that employers and others understand and value these achievements?

Promotion to those employers that informal learning is valuable

Employer organisations and formal education institutes need to develop strong partnerships in order to validate informal learning.

Q30 How can we promote and encourage excellence in the youth work sector?

First need to re-structure and improve planning between statutory and voluntary sectors

Scottish Executive needs to make a commitment to voluntary sectors that they are going to be supported – on a long term basis. Need to learn from good practice from existing youth voluntary sectors.

Q31 What skills, qualities and support does a 21st century youth worker needed?

- **Funding support**
- **Personal characteristics/qualities: caring, supportive, outgoing, open-minded, confident, world vision (beyond geographically boundary)**
- **Skills: social and interpersonal skills, co-ordination, project management skills, emotional-related communication skills, time management, crisis management**
- **Support: on-the-job training, people management, regular update on youth policy and news and emotional support**

Q32 Do volunteers need the same skills and support?

Volunteers should have the same support, but the skills required for the volunteers can be less strict and demanding.

Q33 How do we attract and retain more people as youth workers on a full- or part-time basis?

	Full-time Basis	Part-time Basis
How to attract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid salary package • Training scheme • Link with strategy plans of Higher Education • Work on national level to promote youth work as one of the career choices so as to attract more people to join this field • Link with secondary schools' work placement in order to give students' a taste of youth work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post job support • Sound training scheme • Opportunity to turn into full-time basis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and mobile working environment 	
How to retain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning/training programmes relevant to worker's job • Funding availability • Capacity and style of management level • Opportunity of job rotation • Wages/position promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible working hours • Competitive salary level

Q34 Are there specific types of training that are difficult to access and that workers or volunteers need to do their job more effectively?

- ***The issue of attracting or securing fundings sometimes hinders workers or volunteers from doing their job much effectively.***
- ***The training of managing people***
- ***The training of group work skills***
- ***Demonstrating success – organisational performance***

Q35 Is there enough information about the training available?

To some extent, there is enough information about the training available; however, the prices for the training are sometimes too high for voluntary organisations to afford.

To some extent, training availability is not well circulated so that some local organisations cannot be informed of up-to-date training opportunities.

Q36 How do we make sure that any measures put in place to strengthen standards, including registration, are suitable and work effectively for volunteers?

Volunteers' ideas and thoughts should be consulted before the standards, including registration have been published to ensure that the standards are suitable for volunteers.

The implementation of the standards or registration procedure should be monitored against the national standard of volunteering work within youth work sector.