

YOUTHREACH 2000: A Consultative Process

A report on the outcomes

The National Co-ordinators, YOUTHREACH

YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative process Contents

[Executive Summary](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1, Background](#)

[Chapter 2, Outcomes of the Consultative Process](#)

[Chapter 3, Discussion](#)

[Chapter 4, Recommendations](#)

[Appendix 1: YOUTHREACH – A Brief Outline](#)

[Appendix 2: YOUTHREACH 2000 - the originating document](#)

[Appendix 3: Key Reports](#)

[Appendix 4: Respondents](#)

Executive Summary

Overview

Is YOUTHREACH still relevant? If so, how should it evolve to meet the challenges of the next decade? In March 1999, the National Co-ordinators launched '**YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process**'. They circulated a paper which presented a framework of ideas rather than a set of proposals, and invited responses from 'those who operate the programme, those who manage it, those who participate in it and those who observe it'. This document is reprinted in Appendix 1.

The consultation process elicited a broad range of responses. Overall, there was a general

endorsement for the ideas outlined in the seminal consultation document, that is for a flexible, multi-modal programme, anchored firmly in a continuum of education and training provision and supported by an interlocking range of professional and technical supports. The process also afforded practitioners an opportunity for reflection and review. Throughout, the feedback was positive, thoughtful and useful.

Outcomes of the consultation process

Section 2 sets out the outcomes of the consultation process. The main themes addressed by the submissions were:

- the need to establish a philosophical basis and a set of principles for the programme, and for the wider continuum of which it is a part;
- YOUTHREACH's management and structures, and the need for an integrated service approach at local level;
- the structure and approach of the overall programme;
- supports/services, including guidance and counselling (including advocacy and mentoring) and psychological services;
- the need for longitudinal supports for young people moving in and out of the programme;
- particular emphasis was laid on the importance of responding to the lifelong learning needs of unqualified young workers;
- the need for radical new forms of resourcing towards the objective of equality of outcome;
- the importance of research, especially within the programme, and of regular and systematic reporting;
- the submissions also included critiques of programme - these referred to all levels and emphasised the importance of consistency, clarity, quality, responsiveness, monitoring and publicity
- other themes included, for example, reflections on an effective district approach.

Other issues emerged in the open meetings. They include the following:

- the challenge of constant change;
- perceived increases in levels of disadvantage as the labour market attracts the more motivated young people;
- the possibility that, as a result, workshops and centres may not be able to cater for all young people.
- the need for programme providers to be clear about the limits of their abilities and responsibilities.
- differences in resources for literacy tuition between YOUTHREACH centres and Community Training Workshops; as regards the latter, the inconsistency of this resourcing (between workshops) was also noted.
- The future for YOUTHREACH in the context of the changes in ESF funding
- The ramifications for the overall programme of the Education Welfare Bill
- a range of technical issues were also raised.

The most critical points

Section 3 takes up the arguments presented in Section 2.

It is argued that YOUTHREACH will be discharging its responsibilities in an increasingly dynamic environment. Consequently there is a need to express

- a new conceptual and operational framework which reflects the changing circumstances of modern Ireland, espousing a set of principles and objectives and embodying a shift from institution-based outcomes to solution-based outcomes;
- a national policy framework
- a national management framework
- a local management framework, based on the district approach

The probable outlines and priorities for YOUTHREACH 2000 are then discussed. There is broad consensus on the general outline, structure and approach of the programme, on its management and the range of supports which should underpin it. A number of particular priorities emerged:

- the need to develop even more flexible and learner-oriented models of delivery and participation;
- the needs of YOUTHREACH participants as unqualified young workers;
- the importance of supporting young people on a longitudinal basis, in and out of the programme, progression and placement;
- Guidance, counselling and psychological services (and the need for continuity of concern in this regard);
- The resourcing and delivery of literacy tuition and supports to participants - action is envisaged on a number of levels;
- Quality and effectiveness;
- The compelling need for cohesion and collaboration at local level by the plethora of services targeting early school leavers;
- the importance of the staff's contribution and the need for staff induction, ongoing support and development.

It is argued that the most fundamental principle should be that the young person is the primary focus of all activities. The general view of respondents is that services and programmes should be understood as a continuum of interlocked and overlapping sets, promoting the most effective interaction of different elements in the interests of the clients first, society in general second and the economy third. Thus, YOUTHREACH should not be seen as a programme of last resort, but as one of a suite of services and programmes aimed at combating social exclusion and youth unemployment through the promotion of personal development and lifelong learning.

Recommendations

Section 4 outlines 20 recommendations arising from the consultation process. The following is a summary:

1. National Policy Frameworks and Management

There should be a **single overarching national strategy for all out-of-school actions targeting early school leavers**. YOUTHREACH should be set in this overarching framework. There should be **appropriate national management structures to**

implement the strategy. Therefore, **the inter-Departmental committee should be reactivated and expanded and actions targeting early school leavers in the 15+ age range should be placed under this committee's general direction.** The committee itself should be expanded accordingly. The participants should always be placed at the centre of planning, delivery and evaluation.

2. YOUTHREACH 2000

Within the above framework, YOUTHREACH should continue its mission in providing alternative pathways to education, training and employment for young people who have not benefited from schooling. It should be a single overarching programme, with multiple modes of participation and delivery, including full-time, part-time and outreach. It should continue to have two principal delivery systems, through FAS and VECs, and four strands - CTWs, VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, STTCs and FAS/Justice Workshops.

Programmes and projects in the voluntary and community sector which target early school leavers effectively constitute a fifth strand of YOUTHREACH and their activities should be brought under the general umbrella of policy for out-of-school initiatives aimed at those who have left school early. Providers in this sector should have access to inservice training and other supports associated with the programme. There should be co-ordination of administrative, quality assurance and reporting mechanisms across the various strands of the programme.

3. The District Approach

Local management should be within a 'district approach' and characterised by inter-agency collaboration. A model template or matrix of service needs should be developed, whereby providers can identify service overlaps and lacunae

4. Structure, process and supports

The programme should have two general phases (Foundation and Progression) and four stages - Engagement, Foundation, Progression, Integration.

The development of personal pathways, which the young person can pursue in education, training, employment and home duties, should be emphasised. There should be a particular emphasis on **managed entries and exits**, from school to YOUTHREACH and from YOUTHREACH to other progression or placement. Accordingly, engagement or 'gateway'-type initiatives targeting early school leavers should be evaluated with a view to harmonisation, mainstreaming and structural, resourcing and operational cohesion and towards the development of quality assurance processes

With regard to funding, there is a need for the general provision of **longitudinal supports** to take account of the increasingly dynamic interaction of work and learning. Resourcing should take account of the increasing levels of disadvantage. Consequently, the concept of **differential funding according to perceived level of need** should be developed.

5. Programme and curriculum development

A number of recommendations are made, regarding the programme's curricular priorities, the curricular implications of policy changes on literacy and the implications of an intercultural dimension for the programme. As regards the arts in YOUTHREACH, the report recommends that the National Co-ordinators should establish a working group of practitioners to review the experience of arts-based activities in the programme.

6. Participants as unqualified young workers

A multi-agency task force should be convened to develop a strategy to identify, prioritise and address the lifelong learning needs of unqualified young workers. There will be a need

for curriculum and programme development. Appropriate supports should be put in place to support these young people in sustaining the transition into working life.

7. Guidance, counselling and psychological services

The importance of guidance, both in workshops and centres and in placement and progression was stressed. It is recommended that existing levels of support for guidance, counselling and psychological services should be maintained, and increased as resources allow. Additional resources to recruit expertise in drugs counselling should be allocated to centres in Drugs Task Force areas.

8. Literacy

The development of literacy skills should be a YOUTHREACH priority.

The Department of Education and Science should review and evaluate existing literacy provision in YOUTHREACH with a view to equalising this dedicated resource upwards to an accepted minimum required to achieve real and lasting change in the lives of the participants. In parallel, national management should establish a framework of agreed objectives, delivery standards and operational guidelines regarding literacy tuition, not only in YOUTHREACH, but also in all initiatives directed at young people with inadequate qualifications.

Each centre/workshop should develop a literacy strategy and should review and report on their implementation of this strategy on an annual basis. These should be accompanied by the development of national strategies and staff training initiatives.

9. Funding

Resourcing arrangements should be reviewed across the programme, with a view to eliminating anomalies. Funding should be consistent and predictable across the programme. The National Co-ordinators should conduct a feasibility study on the concept of *differential funding based on need* and on the concept of *longitudinal support* as described in the report.

10. Staff training and support

The multi-disciplinary nature of the programme should be maintained. Staff should be supported and good work acknowledged. Staff training should be encouraged at all levels and across all strands. A general framework for a staff induction programme should be agreed by the National Co-ordinators, in consultation with programme management and staff. Particular attention should be paid to staff information and training processes to develop appropriate skill and coping mechanisms required by those dealing with extreme disadvantage.

11. Active involvement of young people:

Each workshop/centre should establish a system whereby participants are directly engaged in an ongoing and meaningful way in the operation of the programme.

12. Centre-based planning - quality assurance

- The National Co-ordinators should agree a framework of appropriate quality indicators for the programme.
- Each centre should develop and adopt a team approach, including a mission statement, or other expression of fundamental objectives and philosophy, quality indicators, a workshop/centre plan, appropriate review processes, including active

involvement of the participants and an annual report.

13. Technical issues

Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure cohesion across a range of technical issues across the programme (for example trainee holidays and accommodation standards), and adequacy of information regarding entitlements.

14. Research

The National Co-ordinators and the sponsoring Departments should continue to conduct research on an ongoing basis into both the programme's operation and national and regional contexts and phenomena relevant to its operation. The outcomes should be published as appropriate.

15. ICTs

Information and communications technology should be a central feature of all YOUTHREACH provision. All centres and workshops should be on-line and should encourage internet use by programme participants. They should all have workshop or centre web-sites, and be equipped to the highest possible standards.

16. Lone parents

The National Co-ordinators should establish an expert focus group towards meeting the particular needs of lone parents in YOUTHREACH.

17. Young people with drug problems

The National Co-ordinators should convene an expert focus group to examine the question of working with young people with moderate or severe drug problems. Two key issues should be examined - YOUTHREACH's contribution to the National Drugs Strategy, and the implications at centre/workshop level.

18. Mainstreaming pilot projects

A range of relevant pilot projects has been developed in Ireland since 1995. National management, through the National Co-ordinators, should carry out an audit of the major project strands to identify models of good practice which have not yet been mainstreamed, with a view to their adoption.

19. Local and community involvement

VECs should establish community-based management committees for YOUTHREACH Centres. Where possible, these should dovetail with other appropriate local committees. Members should have a track record of commitment to social inclusion.

20. Framework of Objectives and Operators' Guidelines

A new Framework of Objectives and Operators' Guidelines should be drawn up for the programme and completed by December 31st.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank those who made submissions as part of the consultative process. They recognise the time which was devoted to these presentations and the commitment and professionalism they represent. They also wish to thank those who found time to come to the open meetings. Between them a full cross-section of YOUTHREACH was represented, including VEC and FAS management, centre directors, managers and co-ordinators,

resource staff, teachers and instructors, youth services, members of management boards and of community groups.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Elaine O'Hara to the organisation of the overall consultative process, both in the distribution of the initial documentation and the national consultative meetings. They also wish to thank Margaret McSkane, (YOUTHREACH, Co. Monaghan VEC), Frank Brady (Athlone Community Training Workshop) and Wally Pigott (Kilkenny Youth Enterprise) for their assistance with individual consultative meetings. Finally, the support and assistance offered by VEC and FAS regional staff is gratefully recognised.

Introduction

YOUTHREACH was established as a programme in October 1988 by Mr Bertie Ahern TD and Ms Mary O'Rourke TD. At the time they were respectively Minister for Labour and Minister for Education. The programme targeted young people who had left school with no qualifications and drew together a number of strands from the education and training spheres. The network of Community Training Workshops was already in place and the first YOUTHREACH Centres as such were opened in February and March 1989.

The programme has grown and changed over that period. Three separate stages of development may be discerned, and a broad body of experience and professional practice has emerged. But how might YOUTHREACH evolve to meet the challenges of the next decade? In March 1999, the National Co-ordinators launched '**YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process**'. A paper was circulated which presented a framework of ideas rather than a set of proposals - and responses were invited from 'those who operate the programme, those who manage it, those who participate in it and those who observe it'. This document is reprinted in Appendix 1.

A range of submissions was forwarded to the National Co-ordinators. They also engaged in discussions with a number of key groups involved with the programme. In September and October 1999 a series of open consultative meetings was organised at which initial findings were presented and further comments invited, preparatory to the final report being written.

This document reports on the outcomes of that consultative process. It has been compiled on behalf of the National Co-ordinators by Dermot Stokes.

A Brief Outline of YOUTHREACH has been appended for those unfamiliar with the programme and its operation. It gives details of early school leaving in Ireland, as well as describing a range of supports and developments in YOUTHREACH. It has been prepared by the Department of Education and Science.

Dermot Stokes, National Co-ordinator YOUTHREACH, Department of Education and Science
Guss O'Connell, National Co-ordinator YOUTHREACH, FAS

Gerry Griffin, National Co-ordinator Senior Traveller Training Centres

May 1st 2000

1. Background to YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative process

1.1 The origins of the consultative process

The decision to launch **YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process** was prompted by a

number of factors. For example, there was the approach of the year 2000, and the likelihood that Ireland would lose its former Objective 1 status in Europe in whole or in part, with consequent implications for education and training actions. There was also the clear evidence of social and economic change throughout the 1990s. The imminence of a new Operational Programme under the umbrella of the National Development Plan was also a factor as was the attendant need to mainstream projects funded under Employment/Youthstart and parallel mechanisms.

The National Co-ordinators also wished to reflect what practitioners were reporting - that the programme needed to evolve to accommodate social and economic changes, particularly the emergence of a dynamic labour market. It was also their view that all enterprises should re-evaluate their mission every five years, with a view to redefining it and revitalising practice. Consequently they asked 'those who operate the programme, those who manage it, those who participate in it and those who observe it' to look at YOUTHREACH to establish whether the model was still appropriate and how should it develop for the future.

Accordingly, a paper was circulated in March 1999. It did not contain proposals. Instead, it set out a framework of ideas and operational modalities. As the authors pointed out, it was 'an opening statement in a consultation process'. They added that it was 'intended as a trigger to discussion', that it was 'not a blueprint'. They wanted 'practitioners to respond, individually and collectively' and added that 'staff in Centres and Workshops should also be involved, as should participants'.

Responses were invited and received. In September/October 1999, the National Co-ordinators conducted a series of open consultation meetings throughout the country, presenting the initial findings from the first phase of the consultation and inviting comment. The outcomes of these meetings have been incorporated into this final report on the process.

1.2 The wider context - external changes since 1989

YOUTHREACH has not existed in a vacuum during its first decade. The intervening period has seen a series of developments, each of which impinges on the programme's operation. Of particular significance in this regard is the development of a policy-based approach based on agreed principles, and espoused in a broad range of documents such as Social Partnership Agreements, National Plans and Green and White Papers on Education, Human Resource Development and Adult Education. Priority for the disadvantaged has been a feature of national policy through the 1990s, and has elicited increased funding as national resources have permitted, culminating in the launch of the New Deal in December 1999.

Research has played a fundamental role in extending our perceptions of poverty and disadvantage. For example, research conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute (for the Combat Poverty Agency) demonstrated that many of those living below the poverty line were not living in socio-economic blackspots. Similarly, other research has focused on labour market patterns, educational disadvantage, how schools differ in attitude and effectiveness, and so on. Arising from such research, new programmes and initiatives have been launched. Some of these have been in or linked to schooling. Others have been in training and in employment services. Many developments have focused on communities. They all have the alleviation of early school leaving and educational disadvantage as a common objective.

Such developments are still in train, as is evident from the recent passage of the National Qualifications Act through the Dáil and the Education Welfare Bill through the Seanad. When enacted, this latter legislation will significantly alter the landscape in which

YOUTHREACH operates. The school leaving age will rise to 16, schools will report early leavers to the new authority (the Education Welfare Board), and the Board's officers will broker arrangements whereby young people who have been excluded from school will attend alternative education and training programmes. As regards qualifications, the first candidates for the Junior Certificate sat their examinations in 1992, and the NCVA was established in October 1991. Major contemporary developments in training include the introduction of Bridging Training as an entry mechanism to standards-based Apprenticeship and Specific Skills Training, as well as the Integrated Assessment System of Certification.

Finally, two other major external changes should be noted. The first of these is the arrival of the information age. The second is the present economic boom with its attendant buoyant labour market and skills shortages. It was pointed out during consultations that these were very distant visions when the programme was launched in October 1988.

1.3 Changes in YOUTHREACH since 1989

A decade after the programme's launch, there are 74 YOUTHREACH Centres and 47 Community Training Workshops, as well as six FAS/Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform Justice Workshops. In addition, the 28 Senior Traveller Training Centres are now included as part of the overall programme. A broad range of courses is provided, and a range of key supports has been developed. Diverse qualifications options, incareer development, guidance services and information technology are all now features of YOUTHREACH. The principal focus for workshops and centres is the Foundation level. However, throughout the programme there is an increasingly complex pattern of diversification and individualisation, in which young people are facilitated in both *internal progression* taking, for example, the Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied, NCVA or FAS certification, and *external progression*, to an increasing range of education or training programmes or the labour market.

The programme has already passed through three broad phases. During the first phase, the programme was established, developed and consolidated. In the second, from 1993-7, Workshops and Centres reported waiting lists, certification mechanisms were developed and a range of new delivery and support needs were identified, both by staff and by evaluation reports. Moreover, questions were raised concerning the simplicity of the early definition of early school leaving and the adequacy of scale of our responses.

The third phase has been characterised by increased labour market activity - early school leaving has increased nationally while youth unemployment has fallen. Young people are now taking jobs earlier and with lower levels of qualification. Waiting lists are shorter in workshops and centres, where they exist at all, and providers are developing more innovative ways of working with young people to take account of the dynamism and volatility of the labour market. It has also been suggested that the programme's inter-departmental character is less obvious than at the outset, and the 'brand name' of YOUTHREACH is now more usually associated with provision within the education system.

In parallel, other positive developments may be seen. These include the increasing range of progression options opening up for YOUTHREACH participants, and the focused supports available such as national certification frameworks, guidance and counselling resources, advocates, and so on. They also include experience of Youthstart, Integra, Leonardo da Vinci, the Combat Poverty Demonstration Programme and other innovative programmes in training and education. Policy frameworks are developed in the *White Paper Human Resource Development* and the recent Green Paper on Adult Education. Above all, it is now accepted that early school leaving is a central issue and fundamentally affects young

people's life chances. Hence the recognition of the importance of the work done in the programme.

This is the point that YOUTHREACH has arrived at. Ten years old, and looking forward to the next decade. Early school leaving may have changed but, as recent research demonstrates, it hasn't gone away. So, how will the programme evolve to meet the challenges of the next ten years? These will include changes accruing from policy decisions, such as the National Education Psychological Service, the forthcoming Education Welfare Service, changes in the school-leaving age, developments in the Employment Services, changes in the law regarding conditions of employment of young people.

Looking back at the developments referred to in 1.2 and 1.3, it is clear that YOUTHREACH operates in an evolving environment, not a fixed one, and that the future is immediate and tangible, if not necessarily predictable. It is an insight to be borne in mind when contemplating future directions.

2. Outcomes of the consultation process

The consultation process elicited a broad range of responses. In some cases, professional groups established mechanisms through which to respond on a national and collective basis. These included the National Association of YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators and the Advocates. The National Co-ordinator for Senior Traveller Training Centres consulted that network and presented on their behalf. Other submissions came from regional youth services, from centres and workshops and from individuals. The National Co-ordinators also met with management and professional groups for discussion, including the FAS National Internal Early School Leaving Group. The entire process was characterised by a significant level of informal discourse. In many centres the staff and trainees were involved in discussing the future shape of the programme.

Overall, there was a general endorsement for the line of thought indicated in the seminal consultation document, that is for a flexible, multi-modal programme, anchored firmly in a continuum of education and training provision and supported by an interlocking range of professional and technical supports. However, the process also afforded practitioners an opportunity for reflection and review, as is clear from a number of the submissions. Of course, not everyone involved in the programme took that opportunity. Throughout the process, the feedback was positive, thoughtful and useful.

In general, the responses constitute much more than a straightforward reaction to the seminal consultation document. They included philosophical as well as operational insights. The National Co-ordinators were referred to the need to establish and espouse principles as well as practice. The main themes addressed by the submissions were:

- the need to establish a philosophical basis and a set of principles for the programme, and for the wider continuum of which it is a part;
- YOUTHREACH's management and structures;
- the structure and approach of the overall programme;
- supports/services;
- the importance of research, especially within the programme, and of regular and systematic reporting;
- the submissions also included critiques of programme - these referred to all levels and emphasised the importance of consistency, clarity, quality, responsiveness,

monitoring and publicity

- other themes included, for example, reflections on an effective district approach.

These are treated in greater detail below. Other issues emerged in the open meetings. They include the following:

- the constant change faced by practitioners, for example that arising from the current economic boom - the most motivated young people are finding employment and consequently providers are catering for a more multi-disadvantaged group than before. This has ramifications for both workshops/centres and support services. It also has implications for funding.
- Consequently, workshops and centres may not be able to cater for all young people. There is also a need for programme providers to be clear about the limits of their abilities and responsibilities.
- The marked difference in resources for literacy tuition between YOUTHREACH centres and Community Training Workshops; as regards the latter, the inconsistency of this resourcing (between workshops) was also noted.
- The future for YOUTHREACH in the context of the changes in ESF funding
- The ramifications for the overall programme of the Education Welfare Bill

Finally, a range of technical issues arose, such as that of allowances in Travellers Centres - earning above £60 for trainees has a significant impact on spouse's entitlements (see 2.5 below). The possible impact of the recent arbitration finding for the pay allocation to YOUTHREACH Centres also arose. (Note: the situation in this regard is currently under review and no change has been sought by the Department in the interim).

2.1 The need for a philosophical basis and a set of principles

It is evident that respondents accepted and understood the programme's set of aims and objectives, and that individual workshops and centres should have and apply their own mission statements. However, some submissions pointed to the need to set the programme in a wider framework of ideas and policies. For example, the submission from the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service referred to the principles espoused in the White Paper on Education. Others pointed to the Green Paper on Adult Education, and to the application of such concepts as participatory democracy, social inclusion and lifelong learning. YOUTHREACH was seen to be part of the fight against educational disadvantage and social exclusion. It was also argued that the ideological perspective adopted by those working with Travellers was of particular importance.

There was also reference to the need (in the education and training system in general, as well as in YOUTHREACH) to move beyond the concept of equal opportunities and to espouse equality of outcome as an objective. As such, equality may be seen to operate at three levels, equality of opportunity, equality of participation and equality of outcome. This last is understood to be the highest level of equality. This is a significant challenge. If it is accepted as an objective, it demands exponentially greater investment in the most disadvantaged in order to assure greater parity in outcomes.

The active involvement of participants also surfaced as an issue in the submissions. The general tenor in this regard was that a 'client-centred' or 'learner-centred' programme, which YOUTHREACH is supposed to be, should have mechanisms whereby the participants are consulted and actively involved in management and monitoring, and particularly at local or centre level. No models were favoured. However, the example of the Trainee Representative Association in Senior Traveller Training Centres was cited.

Similarly there were calls for meaningful arrangements for community inclusion - one submission referred to 'a tendency .. to operate within model of enclosed order'. With few exceptions, responses were oblique regarding this issue. However, the National Co-ordinators understood the commentary to refer to both the Community Training Workshops and YOUTHREACH Centres. The former have community-based Boards of Management but, in some cases, there has been little change in committee membership. In these instances, the issue is the need for ongoing renewal. On the other hand, the majority of YOUTHREACH Centres do not have a locally-based management committee. Where they do, it is generally felt that the committee significantly enhances the Centre's operational and referral links with the local community.

Finally, reference was made to Travellers and particularly the distinct needs of the 10% of participants in CTWs and YOUTHREACH Centres who are Travellers. Traveller culture is dynamic and evolving and a demand for education and qualifications is evident. Their significant presence in the programme demands the active sensitisation of management and practitioners to the cultural issues which arise.

2.2 YOUTHREACH management and structures

In general, the management of the programme was not addressed in the submissions. It is likely that the absence of any reference to overall management in the initiating document may have contributed to this omission. It is also possible that respondents took the management of the programme as a given. However, this apart, three themes emerged regarding this aspect of YOUTHREACH.

The first was a clear professional concern with developing consistent standards and with quality assurance. For example, the National Association of YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators called for 'a rigorous approach to evaluate effectiveness in achieving objectives and identifying and disseminating best practice'. This latter point was further discussed in the open meetings. Among the suggestions arising was that a checklist of quality indicators should be developed by which YOUTHREACH workshops and centres might measure their effectiveness. There was also a call, at several open meetings, for the promotion of 'a culture of self-evaluation'. The view was expressed in one commentary that policy should be developed at national level, while allowing for a high degree of flexibility and autonomy at local level. At the same time certain aspects of the programme should be standardised.

There was also a call for adequate and consistent support structures regarding a range of different aspects of the programme. They included technical support regarding operational and programme development issues, transnational links and web-sites. One submission suggested a national resource centre for the programme. The need for appropriate childcare supports was also emphasised, as was the benefit of additional counselling resources. Other calls were for a free phone line for possible recruits to the programme, for clarity on simple technicalities such as entitlements and that back-to-education options should be implemented in Senior Traveller Training Centres.

Finally, respondents also called for a minimum standard for premises and resourcing of YOUTHREACH Centres comparable to that already in place for Community Training Workshops. Submissions also commented that mechanisms should be found whereby workshops and centres could be kept open in the evenings. This would facilitate trainees who may have to go into employment and who wish to complete a programme of certification, as well as other groups who might use the facilities. More flexible opening times would also dovetail with a more multi-modal approach to the overall programme.

2.3 The structure and approach of the programme

The flexibility and multi-modal approach indicated in the initiating document was universally endorsed. It was seen as recognising the real world with which providers were dealing on a daily basis. Respondents specifically agreed that YOUTHREACH should have a range of modes of delivery and participation, including full-time, part-time and dispersed. One submission pointed out that this would have the added benefit of allowing different groups to operate from the centre at varying times, thereby enhancing the programme's coverage. There was also a welcome for the concept of work-based education and training at Foundation level - it is clear that increased labour market activity means that more young people are being attracted into the workplace. For the unskilled, it is necessary to establish that learning continues, and ideally towards recognised qualifications. Otherwise, as was regularly pointed out in the open meetings, these young people are at risk of long-term unemployment in the event of an economic downturn.

As regards the structure of the programme, there was a general agreement on the validity of the two broad phases, Foundation and Progression. The need for flexibility of definition and application arose, as elsewhere. For example, in their submission the Advocates argued that a restatement of the programme to comprise foundation and progression should allow 'at all times for flexibility of movement both forward and back, to suit the needs of individual students'. However, the general emphasis in the open meetings was on Foundation rather than Progression, reflecting the principal emphasis of the programme as it has evolved over its first decade.

Within the Foundation Phase, there was agreement on the need for an induction/gateway stage, but no agreement as to how that should be implemented. The Gateway initiative launched by FAS was cited as a possible example. One personal submission argued the need for assessment at entry, pointing out that with a continuous intake system the young people have to fit in to whatever stage of the programme the rest of the group are at. The result is that 'trainers are unaware of the young person's abilities and difficulties until they become obvious'. The author of this submission added that many young people who leave the programme return at a later stage looking for guidance, and that assessment would help establish a starting point for development. Two additional benefits accruing from a structured observation period were identified during the open meetings -

- there would be greater clarity regarding young people with multiple or severe disadvantages, and a consequent possibility of arguing for appropriate resourcing, and
- a sounder basis on which centres might conduct reviews of their effectiveness.

On the subject of the target group, and the definition of early school leaving used by the programme, respondents generally felt that the programme should keep to its core target group, that is unqualified young people in the 15-18 age range, with the exception of the Senior Traveller Training Centres, which have a different target group. The need for flexibility regarding age was identified, for example to accommodate more disadvantaged clients such as lone parents or drug dabblers. Lower ratios and different attendance requirements were also raised (repeatedly) in this regard.

Submissions also referred to the need for career-path planning as an integral part of the programme, and for managed entries and exits into and from YOUTHREACH.

As regards the staffing of the programme a number of points were made. One concerned the importance of multi-skilled inter-disciplinary teams. Particular mention was made of the need for ongoing staff support maintenance and development, through staff meetings and continuous training.

2.4 Supports/services; programme development

In general, the need for coherent programme supports was acknowledged by respondents. Few submissions commented directly on the possible list published in the originating document. However, the opinion that such services were necessary, and that there should be effective linkages and general cohesion between them, was evident across the board. The following points summarise the generality of responses.

2.4.1 Guidance, counselling and psychological services

There was concern that a vacuum existed in this area, given the probable time-lag before the National Educational Psychological Service became involved with YOUTHREACH. It was strongly argued that the existing support for guidance, counselling and psychological services should be maintained. The view was expressed in the open meetings that the service, while welcome, was inadequate and (in some locations) inflexible - 'young people do not have crises by appointment' was one comment. It was also felt that the facility should be extended to include drugs counselling. The issue of drug abuse among possible participants or its corollary, the increasing contact (arising from the current labour market situation) between YOUTHREACH and young people at extreme risk, is of growing significance in the programme. However, a caveat was also entered in one of the open meetings, that centres should not take on young people with drug problems without first clarifying their policy on drugs, and without adequately preparing both the local community and the staff of the centre/workshop.

There was general approval for the Advocates (and Mentors in those areas where they are available). Respondents argue that they are very effective and should be built into the operation of the programme.

2.4.2 Literacy

The issue of literacy arose on two counts. The first concerns the increasing levels of disadvantage manifesting in workshops and centres since late 1997, and the consequent increase in literacy difficulties presented by participants. In this regard it was argued that

- YOUTHREACH Centres are grossly under-resourced in comparison with Community Training Workshops and should at least be funded on a comparable basis, i.e. 800 additional part-time teaching hours per group of 40 trainees;
- many (though not necessarily all) CTWs were also under-resourced in this regard.

The second general point referred to the need to maintain the literacy development of those who left the programme to go into employment or further training. The possibility that this might be done through an outreach approach was explored in the open meetings. It was also pointed out that many adults attending Senior Traveller Training Centres were approaching literacy for the first time and that

- their needs in this area had not been addressed in their brief school careers and
- they themselves were not availing, and probably would not avail, of services in the formal education system.

2.4.3 Tracking system/managed entries and exits

During the open meetings, it was argued that a systematic tracking system needs to be developed which is inclusive of all prospective early school leavers as well as those who actually leave the system. The possible role of the proposed Education Welfare Board in this regard was discussed.

Also in this regard, strong arguments were voiced in favour of managed entries and exits to

the programme, including part-time school/YOUTHREACH programmes, part-time school/youth service projects, part-time YOUTHREACH/employment initiatives and part-time school/training and YOUTHREACH/training approaches. The importance of outreach work was continually stressed.

It was further proposed that the relationship between schools and YOUTHREACH should be two-way, as regards tracking, reporting and providing. At present it appears biased in one direction. Examples were cited of effective partnerships between schools and YOUTHREACH providers, and participants in the consultation meetings argued that a more client-centred approach could mean a young person leaving school in a structured manner, i.e. *before* the relationship with the school had broken down irrevocably, in order that s/he might have a greater likelihood of *returning* to school at some time in the future.

In this regard, it was argued (and accepted) that youth services should have a role in YOUTHREACH and that youth service activities should be understood to occupy a niche in the continuum of services provided for young people at risk of leaving school early or who have already done so. The need for 'parity of esteem' between the informal and formal sectors and between the community/voluntary and statutory was regularly cited.

2.4.4 Operational partnerships at local level

The Education Welfare Service envisaged in the Education Welfare Bill 1999 was mentioned in the initiating document *YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process*, but its contours were still unclear. However, its possible impact exercised participants in the open meetings in September/October 1999, following the Bill's passage through the Seanad. Those present agreed that the service would have a significant impact on YOUTHREACH. Insofar as it would allow for managed entries and exits it was welcomed. However, overall it was felt that much needed to be teased out regarding the operation of the proposed service.

The Educational Welfare Service will also have significant implications for the entire spectrum of those working with young people at local level. In this regard, the need for co-ordination and interaction of these services (including those in the voluntary and community sector) arose.

The value of links at local level with other measures targeting educational disadvantage was agreed. However, some cynicism was expressed about inter-agency collaboration - whereas it is a national policy, it is not systematically applied or observed. Many argued that there was too little co-ordination of the many initiatives and services targeting disadvantaged areas at national, and especially local, level. This, it was maintained, led to inconsistencies of service and lacunae in information and progression pathways. It also created a conflictual climate of competition between providers. Clearly, this is not universal - examples of successful partnership were also cited in the meetings. Inter-agency collaboration is clearly effective when applied. Several submissions explored this issue and pondered the question of what constituted a meaningful district approach. A 'round table' approach was advocated, i.e. a forum in which all partners came, and were treated, as equals.

In summary, the outcomes of the consultation process on this topic are as follows:

- YOUTHREACH is one of many services working with disadvantaged young people at local level; in very many instances these services have been established without reference to what already exists and are competitive rather than complementary
- there is no national consistency of provision of these services (i.e. services which exist in one area do not necessarily exist in others)

- there are many excellent examples of effective district approaches - but this cannot be described as a national pattern. Operational inter-agency partnerships are not a consistent or predictable feature of local planning or service delivery
- where such inter-agency partnership operates, it significantly enhances the effectiveness of each constituent element, including YOUTHREACH
- successful inter-agency partnership is too dependent on local committed individuals - when a given person leaves her/his position, all too frequently the collaboration leaves as well
- Neither YOUTHREACH itself, nor its local management in VECs and FAS, are exceptions to the above statements, and in one open meeting it was suggested that the various strands of YOUTHREACH needed to work more closely together.

It was also argued that there is a need to construct a definition of disadvantage which systematically integrates services at local level. It was further suggested that Government Departments should explore the criteria whereby various actions are funded with a view to encouraging inter agency partnership.

Finally, in this regard, the concept of a 'template of local service needs' arose during the open meetings. It was argued that after twenty years of pilot programmes and targeted actions it should be possible to draw up a matrix of the services which are likely to be required by disadvantaged young people in any area, and that this would facilitate local service audits and local planning. It was argued that it was not especially important *who* delivered a given service, only that *someone* did. Those arguing in favour of such an approach held that this could resolve two key problems at local level:

- the tendency for groups to continually identify and propose (largely similar) solutions to the same problems rather than identifying the role that they might play in a local co-ordinated strategy, and
- the degree to which the national 'vertical service paradigm' and its operational and reporting channels, and its funding criteria in particular, restricts the capacity for innovative and integrated approaches at local level.

2.4.5 Longitudinal supports

There was unanimity regarding the need for longitudinal support for young people before, during and after their participation in the programme. It was felt that this would address the difficulties faced by young people who leave the programme for employment and are unsuccessful in maintaining it. It would also support and offer guidance to those young people who successfully find employment but are still without qualifications. In certain cases it would facilitate re-entry to the programme by young people who had left for various reasons but whose primary need was still Foundation-level education and training. One observation also pointed out that this ongoing contact is also important for programme staff - successful participants are a source of motivation.

Many workshops and centres already maintain contact with former participants in work, further training and education and the home. Ex-trainees also regularly drop in for informal (and sometimes formal) chats. The degree to which this represents a substantial strain on resources arose in the open meetings. YOUTHREACH providers are not resourced for these activities, yet they are of great significance to the young people.

The need for separate funding for this 'outreach' activity arose during the open meetings. As discussed, it was envisaged that providers would work on an outreach basis with young people in both pre and post-Foundation phases. In effect, this would mean that a 50-place

centre would carry a larger case-load of perhaps 100 or more young people. It was suggested that this would be funded separately from the core training activities. There was ambivalence regarding operational modalities such as the location of such support when the question arose in the open meetings. Various, it was envisaged in centres and workshops, in Local Employment Services and Area-Based Partnerships. The relevance of the experience of the Advocates project was regularly cited.

2.4.6 Progression

The availability of an increasing range of progression possibilities was also welcomed. Among these may be numbered (depending on a young person's starting point and personal objectives) the Junior Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Applied, Bridging Training, Customised Training Option and Linked Work Experience. The degree to which certain apprenticeships and other mainline training (for example in FAS, CERT and PLC programmes) are opening up to early school leavers was welcomed. However, it is clear that discontinuities still exist, and that there are regional variations in the availability of options.

As regards the Progression process, submissions argued that it 'needs to be handled carefully and not be threatening'. When this arose in the open meetings, providers pointed out that most early school leavers find transitions intimidating and require support and mentoring when moving from the known into the unknown. It was also suggested that there should be greater cohesion between Foundation provision and specific skills training (in many sectors, including agriculture), and that mainline providers should refer young people with basic learning needs to YOUTHREACH workshops and centres to address those needs.

A number of other issues also arose, such as the need for clarity regarding the recognition of qualifications (such as the NCVA Foundation Level) as meeting entry requirements for Specific Skills Training, apprenticeships, etc. It was accepted that most apprenticeships now require minimum standards in certain subjects.

2.4.7: Assessment and Certification

There was little feedback regarding assessment and certification. This may reflect the very significant progress that has been made regarding the development of appropriate qualifications by the NCVA and FAS, and the increased availability of a range of appropriate options for Foundation and Progression Phases, including:

- the Integrated Assessment System,
- the National Foundation Certificate,
- the National Vocational Certificate at Level 1 and 2,
- the Junior certificate
- the Leaving Certificate Applied.

As already observed, there was a demand that qualifications be more systematically recognised, and that the above range be marketed with young people, their parents and particularly with employers.

2.4.8 YOUTHREACH graduates as unskilled young workers

It was acknowledged that the labour market was particularly active at present, and attracted young people out of school and out of YOUTHREACH. However, it was also argued that

- a significant proportion of early school leavers had multiple short-term jobs. They

may have difficulty in sustaining employment.

- those unskilled young people who were taking up low-status and short-term employment would be the first to be made redundant if there was an economic downturn
- hence, employers need to accept their social responsibility regarding employees with limited skills.

Consequently, there was strong support for the idea of work-based training, supported by Advocacy and longitudinal outreach support mechanisms. The view that pathways into employment should be more flexible, and should incorporate ongoing basic skills development, such as literacy, was expressed.

2.4.9 Other supports

A number of other possible supports featured in various submissions. They include

- regional co-ordinators for the programme, as recommended in the ESF Programme Evaluation Unit report (1996) and the Review of Staffing Arrangements carried out by CHL Consultants for the Department of Education (1996), and as is already in place in City of Dublin VEC and County Dublin VEC. This suggestion emerged from and referred to provision in the education system, as FAS already has a regional co-ordination mechanism;
- a national resource centre;
- a technical support unit - the excessive demands on the National Co-ordinators was acknowledged;
- support with web-sites and internet access etc. However, while agreeing on the importance of information and communications technologies, some respondents (for example the Advocates) reminded the National Co-ordinators that it was important that the basics - reading and writing - were not neglected.
- transnational links - the benefits of these links were agreed. However, they can also be time-consuming.
- crèche facilities in situ, and/or *predictable, consistent and adequate* childcare allowances as an entitlement.

2.4.10 Staff development

The contribution of the staff was emphasised in the open meetings. The need for staff induction was argued, particularly in the light of the present skills shortages in the labour market. Increased levels of stress were described. It was emphasised that the programme needs to find ways of supporting staff in difficulty.

The importance of continuous staff training also featured in submissions and open meetings. There appear to be disparities across the country and between the three strands of the programme regarding participation in such activities. In addition, one submission argued that 'staff often say yes to incareer development but do not take it up when offered - it should be part of their employment contract'. The authors of this submission stressed, however, that the training should be appropriate (including its accessibility) and that there should be ongoing assessments of training needs. They did not express an opinion as to whose responsibility this was. Another submission argued the need for a comprehensive programme of staff development, administered at national level, with 'clear goals and objectives'. The difficulty of doing so in a programme with two separate Departmental

funding and management tracks was not addressed in this contribution. The additional challenge of providing training to staff who are largely part-time (amongst whom there is a high turnover) was also instanced.

The importance of staff training also arose in discussion of the implications of increased Traveller participation in YOUTHREACH workshops and centres. It was noted that centres were also working with young immigrants and that, in line with the experience of other European Member States, their numbers were likely to increase. It was argued that this will demand the development of an intercultural environment, underpinned by guidelines, programme development, supports and inservice training. One submission indicated the probable need for new courses in Traveller culture as well as 'conflict resolution techniques and practices'.

2.4.11 Research

A number of submissions and observations argued that there should be a more systematic approach to research and reporting within the programme and concerning issues which impinge on it. This would facilitate review and analysis.

2.4.12 Critiques of the programme

Submissions and contributions to the open meetings contained a range of critiques of the programme. These applied to all levels of its operation. Overall, they emphasised the need for consistency, clarity, quality, responsiveness, monitoring and publicity. The district approach was also the subject of significant levels of comment. In general its value and importance were acknowledged, but there were reservations concerning its application (see 2.4.4). One submission contained a reflection on an effective district approach, which was seen to be one in which all participants were seen to be equal.

2.4.13 The role of the arts in YOUTHREACH

The importance of the arts as a developmental instrument was strongly argued in a number of submissions and open meetings. Respondents maintained that the arts provide a safe and challenging environment in which to address issues. They also offer opportunities for the kind of 'success experiences' and empowerment which are central to developing self-esteem. In addition, they help foster the kind of core skills which are both invaluable to a person making the transition to adult life and to individuals in the modern workplace.

One submission referred to the need for 'an intercultural/multicultural curriculum' being available in all centres.

2.5 Technical issues

- The need for clarity and consistency regarding conditions of participation for Travellers between STTCs and YOUTHREACH workshops and centres, in which they constitute 10% of participants nationally, was argued. A range of inherent tensions in the inclusion of STTCs under YOUTHREACH was highlighted. These included eligible age limits and the employment conditions of staff (given that in a number of YOUTHREACH Centres and CTWs, Travellers constitute up to 90% of participants).
- It was suggested that the eligibility criteria for Travellers on Community Employment schemes need to be examined. At present, they may become participants on such schemes if they are over 16 and have completed one year in a training centre, whereas members of the settled community must be over 21 years. In general such participation is seen as progression. Some schemes are Traveller-focused, and offer an enterprise-oriented development option.
- Many respondents maintained that trainee allowances need to be increased. It was

pointed out that a young person can earn as much for one day's casual employment as for one week's participation in YOUTHREACH.

- The position of refugees was also raised - they are prospective clients. The situation of asylum seekers who, after one year's residence, are available for work but not for training, also needs to be addressed.

2.6 Funding mechanisms

Funding mechanisms were addressed in submissions and consultations, principally from an operational perspective, and taking into account the constantly changing nature of the clientele. In particular, the need for consistency in approach was emphasised, to take account of differences of need, changing circumstances and clientele and geographic factors, and to ensure equality of provision across the country.

Two separate but related models of funding mechanisms were prompted by consideration of these issues, and both were the subject of considerable discussion in the consultations:

- **differential funding:** i.e. resourcing which takes account of the differing needs presented by YOUTHREACH participants, and which funds and supports workshops and centres accordingly. This, it was argued, should apply to providers' direct education and training funding;
- **longitudinal funding:** various successful models of outreach support activity were cited during the consultation. It was argued that separate funding should be provided to sustain these activities. In effect, this would mean providers carrying a responsibility for supporting participants before and after their direct participation. This would be discharged on a 'case-load' basis through outreach activities, such as tracking, advocacy and mentoring, literacy tuition in the workplace, etc. It was acknowledged that such an approach would prove operational and administrative challenges for providers, support services and employers. However, precedents were also cited, such as the Customised Training Option. This is a FAS measure which offers additional supports to young people in a range of training activities (though not employment).

The need to develop observation and assessment systems to support the concept of differential funding and guarantee transparency, accountability and effectiveness was accepted. It was suggested that this be researched immediately. As regards longitudinal funding, this was widely welcomed as an idea. However, there was no obvious consensus as to how this might operate.

Finally, as already noted on page 6 above concern was expressed concerning instructions issued to VECs by the Department of Education and Science regarding resource allocations after the 1998 settlement of the pay dispute in YOUTHREACH centres.

2.7 Mainstreaming Youthstart and other project experience

The issue of mainstreaming Youthstart and other projects was addressed in submissions and discussed during the consultations. YOUTHREACH 2000 was seen as an appropriate mechanism by which this might be achieved.

3. Discussion

Introduction

The foregoing summarises the complex set of responses and interactions arising from the consultative process. They constitute a robust defence of the general YOUTHREACH model as it has evolved since its inception, and a reassertion of the programme's approach,

notwithstanding inconsistencies and difficulties. The central message is that early school leaving is still a significant problem, that those with least qualifications remain marginalised, even in a buoyant labour market, and that there is continuing need for active interventions on their behalf. Respondents do not suggest that YOUTHREACH is the sole answer. Rather, it is understood as one element in a suite of interlinked responses, guided at national level and delivered at local level. However, the centrality of its contribution across its three strands and the ongoing validity of its overall approach were vigorously asserted. It therefore follows that respondents believe that the model is indeed still relevant, but the programme needs to maintain, and preferably increase, its inherent responsiveness, flexibility and localisation, its capacity for change and innovation, and its range of infrastructural supports.

It will have to do so in an increasingly dynamic environment. The end of the 20th century saw Irish society and the national economy grappling with global phenomena of enormous power. One of these is the change from a society in which wealth was generated by the production and distribution of goods to one dominated by information and services. Globalisation is another, paradoxically shadowed by the development of ever-more local and particular markets, as is clear from the Internet. These forces offer both opportunities and challenges, but they also pose the risk of further excluding the marginalised from active and positive participation in society and the economy.

3.1 General conceptual frameworks

It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss the many forces that will impinge on Irish education and training policy in the 21st century, of which change itself is perhaps the most immense. However, there is no doubt that YOUTHREACH will develop within an overall national framework of ideas, policies and operations. Furthermore, if the past decade is an indication, the programme is likely to be in the front-line of changes which will in due course affect the mainstream. So, the programme is not divorced from wider considerations of the future. Equally, YOUTHREACH's contribution to national agendas and its fulfilment of a particularly complex role in a continuum of service should not be overlooked in future planning.

The key concepts that will frame our education and training actions in the next decade are already clear and have been identified as national priorities. Social inclusion is one. It represents a complex challenge. Social exclusion is now understood as a dynamic and multi-dimensional process of detachment and denial of social rights. Poverty, by contrast is a static outcome (for example of low income). So, social inclusion extends far beyond simply creating employment, or raising standards of living.

Similarly, the adoption of lifelong learning as an overarching conceptual and operational framework poses a range of challenges in the delivery of services and the development of systems. New forms of guidance will be one. Individualisation, which is already a dominant force in information and communications technologies, is another, i.e. the need to establish individually tailored responses and pathways. Localisation is a third - the need to set provision into a local and appropriate setting. The risk of developing a marginalised 'parallel' system alongside, but never intersecting with, the mainstream system is a fourth.

Responding to these challenges will demand new approaches, for example *from institution-based solutions to outcome-based solutions*. In a world characterised by change and flux, flexibility and the capacity to react rapidly and effectively will be of paramount importance. Therefore, territorialism, isolation and rigid boundaries must become things of the past in education and training and social inclusion policies for youth generally. Increasingly, schooling, vocational training and out-of-school provision, including youth work, will be

seen as overlapping sets, not as mutually exclusive boxes. As a result, *permeability* will, indeed must, become a characteristic of these sets. Thus, for example, a young person could be both at school and in YOUTHREACH, if this was the most appropriate arrangement. Another might be in work and in school, in a youth project, and so on.

However, the most fundamental concept is an old one, that the young person is the focus of action, not the programme or the institution.

3.2 Early school leaving in a dynamic economy

At national level, the recent explosive growth of the Irish economy has been well documented. Less publicised, but no less significant for the topic under discussion, has been the attendant increase in early school leaving and decrease in youth unemployment. Retention to the end of senior cycle is now at 81%. In November 1993, there were over 43,000 young people between 15-24 unemployed. By late 1999 this had dropped to 28,500. This experience is consistent with international trends.

However, early school leavers are at grave risk of future isolation, should there be a significant slowdown in the economy. Moreover, some are more vulnerable than others. It is already clear from labour market research that those without qualifications are least likely of all school leavers to sustain labour market participation *even in an economy with acute labour shortages*. The need to address this group's lifelong learning needs is a national imperative, and respondents clearly envisaged that YOUTHREACH would sustain a role in so doing. However, this will demand considerable development and co-ordination between a range of players, including the social partners. It will also require new methods of management and delivery. The difficulties of doing so in many of the workplaces where unqualified early school leavers find employment should not be underestimated.

An attendant phenomenon is reported in YOUTHREACH. As already indicated, providers maintain they are recruiting increasing numbers of young people with multiple disadvantage. This also is consistent with international trends. However, it clearly poses a fundamental question regarding the suitability of the existing model and the programme's general resourcing for this new, more complex clientele. At the very least, it will be necessary to establish staff information and training processes to develop appropriate skill and coping mechanisms. It will also be necessary to review and, if necessary, re-define the limits of the programme's competence. Finally, it will be important to have referral mechanisms and appropriate communication and operational channels and inter-agency links in place at local level, guided by a national strategy and management structure.

Throughout the consultations, there was an emphasis on the young person, and the primacy of her/his needs over those of the institutions. However, a competitive environment exists in many locations, one in which providers are resourced according to numbers of participants and evaluated according to quantitative criteria which take no account of varying levels of learning or behavioural difficulty. In such circumstances, it is difficult for institutions to collaborate and innovate. It is even more so as staff teams become entrenched, or burn out from the demands of dealing with extreme disadvantage and behavioural problems on a daily basis, with balancing the demands of assessment and certification with a person-centred approach, with high levels of turnover and constant pressure for recruitment. These phenomena make demands at all levels -

- for national and local collaboration
- for support for programme development and
- for staff maintenance and development strategies. In certain cases it may also require arrangements for redeployment and re-training of staff who have burnt out.

3.3 National policy frameworks

The future development of a programme like YOUTHREACH cannot be considered in isolation. Unemployment is no longer the problem it was in the late 1980s and, notwithstanding the increases in early school leaving since 1997, a range of measures to retain pupils in school has been introduced. However those young people who leave with poor qualifications, i.e. YOUTHREACH's core target group, remain extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of the economy, and generally fail to sustain satisfactory participation in the labour market. Moreover, early school leaving is recognised as a European problem and has remained a constant feature of even the most successful economies, each of which supports actions broadly similar to YOUTHREACH. Accordingly, it is appropriate to continue the programme's activities, developing and changing it according to the current needs of the target groups. The attendant challenges of resourcing, supporting and managing in such a dynamic environment must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Before discussing the implications of the consultative process in this regard, it is important to consider the policy, structural and operational settings in which the programme must deliver. This may mean a shift in YOUTHREACH's focus, from unemployed young people to social exclusion and lifelong learning. It would appear from submissions to the consultation process that this change is already in train.

The service architecture is being renovated and rebuilt in line with national aspirations on social inclusion and lifelong learning. Optimistically, the period 1999-2001 may be envisaged as a transition stage leading to a fully developed and integrated service infrastructure. Nonetheless, as described in 2.4.4 above, a wide range of disconnected actions have been launched, often targeting the same target group and involving significant expenditure of resources. Confusion, duplication and competition are reported from many areas of the country, as are service lacunae and incompatibilities. Recent Government initiatives such as the Integrated Service Process are highlighting the need for an integrated inter-agency service infrastructure and operational culture. However, there is an urgent need to situate all actions in a general framework of principles, objectives, policies, structures, operational strategies and programmes and evaluative processes.

Fundamentally,

- there is a need to state or restate the general national framework of principles and objectives underpinning all actions and services targeting the disadvantaged, by which policymakers and providers may develop strategies, structures, programmes and evaluative processes;
- the most fundamental principle should be that the young person is the primary focus of all activities, and her/his needs should take precedence over those of society and the economy;
- services and programmes should be equally accessible and of consistent standards to all (in this case to early school leavers);
- a lifelong learning approach should underpin policy and practice - it should be possible for learning, and assessment and certification, to continue, whether the young person is in YOUTHREACH or other programme, has returned to school or is in employment, or any combination of these;
- services and programmes should be understood as a continuum of interlocked and overlapping sets, promoting the most effective interaction of different elements in the interests of the clients first, society in general second and the economy third;
- consequently, YOUTHREACH should not be seen as a programme of last resort, but

as one of a suite of services and programmes aimed at combating social exclusion and youth unemployment through the promotion of personal development and lifelong learning.

But how are these aspirations to be achieved? As is manifest in the National Development Plan, the State is investing substantially in the fight against social exclusion. Actions targeting disadvantaged young people are proposed across a broad spectrum of sectors. In many cases, they identify the same general target groups. It is imperative that their implementation is co-ordinated at both national and local level. Arising from the consultation process, two connected strategies suggest themselves, the first at national level and the second at local level.

3.4 National management framework

YOUTHREACH is formally managed by an inter-Departmental Committee which represents the Departments of Education and Science and Enterprise, Trade and Employment/FAS. Informally, this committee's functions have devolved to a small operational sub-committee. However, this is just one of a range of committees through which various initiatives are guided. Many of these have been established on an ad-hoc basis. There is a considerable overlap in membership. In the interests of clarity, consistency, effectiveness and maximum beneficial impact of resources, it may be argued that the purpose, structures and membership of these committees should be reviewed. Such may be one outcome of the ISP. However, there is also a clear need for a unifying statement of principle, policy and strategy regarding the plethora of initiatives directed at young people. Urgent consideration should be given to the formulation of an inter-Departmental Green Paper on Programmes and Services for Young People.

As regards YOUTHREACH national management, the inter-Departmental committee should be reactivated and expanded. It should meet at least twice yearly, devolving functions to sub-committees as appropriate. In addition, there is a compelling argument that all education, training, youth service and employment actions targeting early school leavers in the 15+ age range should be placed under this committee's general direction, in order to bring cohesion and consistency of intent, resourcing and standards to provision, and in order to oversee the mainstreaming of such project strands as Youthstart. As regards the committee itself,

- its membership should be extended to include representation from other Departments and sectors involved in actions aimed at the same general target group;
- the professionals charged with co-ordinating the many and varied actions under its remit should be *ex officio* members;
- it should develop mechanisms whereby the target group's voice may be heard;
- it should agree an overarching policy and strategy regarding *all* out-of-school programmes and services for early school leavers, including

, principles

, objectives

, management structures

, operational strategies and programmes

, support services and structures

, communications and evaluation processes.

, Particular attention should be given to the effective articulation of measures, especially at local level.

This would address issues raised in 2.1 and 2.2 above.

3.5 Local management framework - the District Approach

If national statements of principle and policy are not to remain aspirational, and if national programmes are to be accessible, consistent and effective, considerable attention must be devoted to local management and delivery.

YOUTHREACH itself has been described as a national programme which is managed and delivered at local level. It was originally intended that the programme would draw on the best practice from education, training and youth work. It should therefore demonstrate a practical approach to joint action, and how a seamless range of supports can be provided to combat social exclusion, and how marginalised young people can be integrated back into the mainstream. **In many places it does so.** Elsewhere, however, consultation and collaboration are weak. This often masks the effectiveness with which the education and training systems have *separately* responded to the needs of early school leavers. The challenge identified in the consultation process is twofold:

- to record, develop and implement best practice and models from both systems
- to do so in such a way as to promote consistency of delivery and standards throughout the country.

Towards meeting these challenges, the outcomes of the consultation process suggest the renewal of the 'district approach' or area-based strategy, in order to co-ordinate programmes and services and ensure maximum effectiveness. However, it will be necessary to redefine terms. It is clear that interpretations differ and that partnership is not a *consistent* feature of service delivery throughout the country. In the light of the considerable resources to be devoted to the battle against social exclusion over the period 2000-2006, it will be necessary to address this issue. As respondents pointed out, terms like 'district approach' and 'local partnership' will remain largely aspirational unless active steps are taken to unify policy and practice. Therefore, the key question concerns the development and operation of this approach. The outcomes of the consultation process indicate:

- The need to develop the 'template of service needs' or checklist of required services at local level described in 2.4.4 above
- The usefulness of an independent brokerage mechanism, to facilitate local consultation and agreement. Models already exist, for example in the Education Networks established under the Combat Poverty Agency's Demonstration Programme;
- The District Approach involves
 - the identification by providers of the contribution they can make to addressing the service and programme needs of young people in their areas;
 - the securing of existing and necessary additional resources and
 - local negotiation and adjustment (mediated if necessary).
 - It concludes with the agreement and development of the local action plan.

It is therefore envisaged that every area would develop a local action plan for those who have left school early. This should dovetail with parallel plans aimed at potential early school leavers who are still in school. The active participation by schools should be

encouraged and every effort made to manage young people's exits from (and re-entry to) school in such a way as to maximise their prospects of continuing their education and training. It is likely that the Education Welfare Board will fulfil a significant role in fostering such relationships at local level, when it becomes operational. The contribution of community and voluntary agencies should not be overlooked.

In the longer term, the local co-ordination of services may also be addressed in future considerations of local government reform, for example by the establishment of a position (analogous to an Adult Education Organiser) of County Co-ordinator of Young People's Programmes and Services. Such a development would be consistent with patterns in north European countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, in which municipalities are directly involved. It would also go some way towards meeting the call for regional co-ordination made in the ESF Programme Evaluation Unit's report on Early School Leaver Measures (1996).

It is beyond the remit of this report to recommend such a strategy. However, the authors urge that the issue of local co-ordination of programmes and services be addressed as a priority.

Having discussed the policy settings, we will now turn to the programme itself.

3.6 YOUTHREACH post 2000

The consultative process is clear regarding the future outlines of YOUTHREACH:

3.6.1 Management

- There should be a single overarching national strategy for actions targeting disadvantaged young people in the following fields: vocational education and training, youth, justice and crime prevention, drugs and health. This should include a statement of principles.
- There should be appropriate national management structures to implement this strategy.
- YOUTHREACH should be set in this overarching framework.
- It should be one overall programme, with multiple modes of participation and delivery, including full-time, part-time and outreach.
- It should continue to have two delivery systems, through FAS and VECs, and four strands - CTWs, VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, Senior Traveller Training Centres and FAS/'Justice' Workshops.
- A range of programmes and projects in the voluntary and community sector (including area-based Partnerships) which target early school leavers effectively constitute a fifth (or 'shadow') strand. This should be governed by policy for out-of-school initiatives aimed at those who have left school early, and should come under YOUTHREACH's general operational remit, including staff training and general service supports.
- local management should be within a 'district approach' and characterised by inter-agency collaboration.

In the above scenario, 'outreach' may include a range of actions and settings, including visiting tutors and satellite centres.

3.6.2: The need for a philosophical basis and a set of principles (2.1 above)

Whereas the submissions did not challenge the founding documents of YOUTHREACH, changing circumstances and the turnover of staff indicate the need to restate and work through the programme's core philosophy and set of values with providers. These should be consistent with those agreed at national level as suggested at 3.3 above.

Regarding the challenge of achieving equality of outcome (2.1), one respondent commented that 'this is the challenge and the game'. However, the implication of adopting this as an objective is clear - progressively greater expenditure according to need, and exponentially greater investment in the education, training and support of the most disadvantaged. This issue is discussed below.

3.6.3 Structure, process and supports

The consultation process indicates four stages for the programme - Engagement, Foundation, Progression, Integration, encompassed in two broad phases, Foundation and Progression. In addition, the following comments may be made:

- The development of personal pathways, which the young person can pursue in education, training, employment and home duties, should be emphasised.
- There should be a particular emphasis on managed entries and exits
- There is a need for the general provision of longitudinal supports to take account of the increasingly dynamic interaction of work and learning;
- Resourcing should take account of the increasing levels of disadvantage
- Youthstart and other projects should be unified/mainstreamed under YOUTHREACH umbrella where possible.
- Ongoing innovation should continue to be a feature of YOUTHREACH at all four stages.
- The programme should be set into a framework of adequate and consistent supports and linked services.

The range of issues which emerge from this developing scenario have been set out in Section 2 above. The following comments are directed towards their resolution:

3.7: Management and structures

The revitalisation of the inter-departmental approach has already been discussed at 2.2 and 3.3 above. Outstanding issues raised include

- a checklist of quality indicators and the development of a culture of self-evaluation. Whereas the former is achievable, the latter is a formidable undertaking;
- adequate and consistent support structures: this has already been discussed at 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above. The potential significance of such structures is acknowledged. However, it is also recognised that their formal establishment may have to await other policy developments;
- minimum standards of accommodation for YOUTHREACH Centres, to be set out in common guidelines;
- more flexible opening times: the outcomes of the consultation process are significant in this regard, and are consistent with the contours of the Back To Education Initiative indicated in the Green Paper on adult education. However, there are operational and administrative issues to be resolved regarding this suggestion;
- consistency across a range of aspects, such as staff resources, holiday entitlements

(staff and participants).

Regarding administrative and reporting systems, a multi-modal programme and approach will demand new ways of thinking among policymakers and providers and will need new and more flexible reporting and administrative systems. These will have to dovetail with internal and other tracking and reporting systems, for example of the Education Welfare Board, FAS mainline and Employment Services, Local Employment Services and Youth Services. Other implications are discussed below.

3.8: The structure and approach of the programme

The general contours of the next phase of the programme have already been outlined in 3.2 above. However, a number of issues were identified but unresolved in the consultation process.

3.8.1 Engagement: the role of induction/gateway programmes

One issue concerned the concept of a gateway or induction stage. This needs to be resolved. In the outline of future development at 3.6 above, this is identified under the general heading of engagement. A number of model actions exist, of which Gateway is the most numerically significant. This was introduced by FAS in 1999 as a part-time, short-term appraisal programme aimed at early school leavers who are incapable of or lack the motivation to enter YOUTHREACH. The young people explore a range of options, including a return to education, training or employment. It is envisaged as a more flexible way of engaging with early school leavers, as complementary to Foundation education and training and as part of a continuum of provision.

Similar actions have emerged elsewhere. They include aspects of both the Youthlynx project in Kilkenny and the HOUSE project in Cox's Demesne, which were funded by Youthstart. Other provision with much in common with Gateway include certain Garda Youth Diversion Projects, Health Board Neighbourhood Youth Projects, LINE projects, projects in Drug Task Force areas and aspects of both 8-15 Early School Leaver and Springboard projects. Indeed, there is no general shortage of this kind of action. However, there is a major problem regarding their cohesion and co-ordination (local and national) and quality assurance. It would be opportune to evaluate these actions with view to harmonisation and mainstreaming. In the meantime, they should be continued on a pilot basis, as appropriate and as agreed by national management.

3.8.2: YOUTHREACH participants as unqualified young workers

The degree to which the labour market is now impinging on the programme's work is clear from the responses. This concern dovetails with a broader national issue, i.e. the lifelong learning needs of unqualified young workers. Whereas many young people now leave school and YOUTHREACH for employment, this is frequently a retrograde step in terms of their long-term interests and development. The economy's need for workers is acknowledged. But equally, society clearly has responsibilities to these young people. What are the limits of these, and how are they to be discharged in a buoyant labour market? Education and training prepare the young people for the workplace, but who prepares the workplace for the young people?

There are no simple answers to these questions, but finding them is a priority equal to that which attached to young unemployed in the past. Central to solving the problem will be a continuity of concern and involvement - i.e. longitudinal support. Research indicates that a significant proportion of YOUTHREACH participants move in and out of both the programme and employment many times. Therefore, while the ex-trainee is in employment, s/he should remain a YOUTHREACH participant, with ongoing access to all

the supports the programme can offer. This already happens informally in many cases. For the future, the programme should be resourced to discharge this function, or otherwise supported. The Advocates project has already demonstrated how such support can operate.

This line of thought indicates that mentoring, which is already a feature of many workshops and centres, and effective models of which have been developed in a variety of pilot projects, should become a core function of the programme, with appropriate resourcing, staffing and staff training. It also suggests that in future some 'hard skill' training will take place in the workplace rather than the workshop, and that the programme's emphasis will move more emphatically towards personal development and communications skills. In particular, there will be need for flexible funding for programmes of literacy development for young people in the workplace, in partnership with the social partners. These may be delivered through YOUTHREACH - this is a policy decision. However, particular attention should be directed at the marginal employment situations in which many early school leavers find jobs. In addition, providers should be able to assist ex-participants in continuing to accrue credits towards certification.

It is understood that YOUTHREACH will not necessarily cater for all these young people, and the degree to which other education and training and youth mechanisms provide for early school leavers is acknowledged. Traineeships, Bridging programmes and the Back-to-Education Initiative represent considerable conceptual advances.

Finally, provision for unqualified young workers must be generally accessible and consistent, and should be nationally co-ordinated and evaluated.

3.8.3 Progression

Much the same issues arise regarding the Progression phase of the programme. Of necessity, progression is a more diffuse concept. However, a very significant range of internal and external options has developed. For example, 858 early school leavers entered standards-based apprenticeship in the first half of 1999. Numbers entering other options between January and June 1999 are as follows (M=male, F=female):

Linked Work Experience (33M; 74F)

Bridging (69M; 53F)

Community Training (115M; 93F)

Customised Training (49M; 56F)

Ring-fenced Specific Skills Training (175M; 111F)

Traineeship (36M; 30F)

Special CTW Progression Options (140M; 173F).

Other progression options opening up include PLC and CERT courses. 32 centres and workshops are currently offering the Leaving Certificate Applied. In 1999 over 250 young people from all three strands of the programme sat the Junior Certificate in whole or in part. Statistics regarding NCVA certification are given in section 3.9.

The central question does not concern the nature of the progression options available. Rather it is to do with access, consistency and sustainability. Are these options available throughout the country? Are they consistent as regards delivery and outcomes? Do the young people sustain their participation? How can they best be supported to ensure maximum positive outcomes? Should part-time bridging programmes be developed linking YOUTHREACH with various mainline options? Should these providers refer young people

with basic learning needs to YOUTHREACH workshops and centres to address those needs? If so, how should YOUTHREACH providers reciprocate?

Once again, mentoring emerges as a significant positive factor. For example, whereas the progression rate to employment in centres and workshops where there was an Advocate did not increase, the proportion returning to education rose from 5% to 14% and those progressing to training rose from 12% to 24%. In itself, this is a strong argument for the mainstreaming of this service.

3.9: Assessment and Certification

That certification did not feature strongly in the consultation process has been noted. There has been marked progress in this area since the programme's inception. By way of example, the statistics for NCVA certification for May 1999 are as follows:

49 YOUTHREACH Centres entered 903 learners. Of these, 61 achieved National Foundation certificate and 823 received Records of Achievement at Foundation and level 1. Similarly, 18 Senior Traveller Training centres entered 301 learners, 22 of whom achieved National Foundation certificate and 269 achieved Records of Achievement. 14 Community Training Workshops entered 269 learners, 17 of whom achieved National Foundation Certificate. 249 achieved Records of Achievement.

It has been noted that the increased demand among Travellers for certification indicates that they see it as a means of achieving equality of access and outcomes to the settled community.

That said, the apparent consensus that more needed to be done to articulate the various forms of certification, and to market the less widely known is important. After all, the participants come to YOUTHREACH with few qualifications in the first place. The enactment of the National Qualifications Act should set in train the major national project of agreeing a national qualifications framework. In time, this will resolve the issue of recognition of certification, and the inter-connection of different systems of qualification. The issue of marketing qualifications is a more complex matter, and it is beyond the remit of a report such as this to offer recommendations in that regard.

Another major challenge, to the programme, qualifications authorities and the wider community, arises from the question of young unqualified workers. If, as seems likely, young people are moving in and out of programmes, employment and other roles, how will their progress be assessed and recognised? If a participant has begun to accrue certificates or records of achievement, how can s/he be supported to continue this process while in the workplace or elsewhere? What outreach supports will be needed and how can they be provided? What changes must be made in assessment and certification procedures to accommodate this changed situation? What role will employers play, and how?

These issues are already being addressed by FAS and the NCVA. However, the questions also apply to the Junior Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate. Furthermore, the same general questions arise further along the qualifications trajectory, for example at Post-Leaving Certificate level. In their resolution, the rights and needs of the participants must be placed in the foreground.

A number of options are indicated, including part-time programmes, visiting teachers and night programmes in YOUTHREACH workshops and centres. It is acknowledged that the changing pattern of participation poses significant challenges to providers, qualifications authorities and employers. However, given the particular vulnerability of the YOUTHREACH target group, it is incumbent on both to endeavour to dovetail their arrangements in the interests of the lifelong learning needs of the young people.

Finally, if there is an increased emphasis on certification, there is a risk that YOUTHREACH will become curriculum-focused rather than needs-based. The kind of reflection and review processes indicated elsewhere in this report may help providers to retain the core emphasis on the needs of the individual young person. Doing so allows for certification to be introduced as and when appropriate, and maintains the holistic and achievement-oriented culture which has served participants well in the past.

3.10: Guidance, counselling and psychological services

The broad support for guidance services is acknowledged, as is the need to develop existing services, particularly for those at risk of or already dabbling in drugs. In general, there is a palpable need to ensure access, relevance and quality of service, national pattern and cohesion and measures should be undertaken towards these objectives, including a review of activities delivered under existing funding mechanisms in 1998 and 1999. In this regard, the report of the Task Force on Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services in YOUTHREACH (1998) recommended the appointment of a National Co-ordinator for these services. This should be reviewed in the light of emerging policy and structures. *However, a clear mechanism for the co-ordination and (particularly) the professional support of these services should be set in place as a matter of urgency.*

There is also a need to elaborate on the integrated model of guidance indicated in the Task Force report. In particular, the role of non-formal guidance (and those activities sometimes known as MAGIC activities, i.e. mentoring, advocacy, guidance, information and counselling) should be developed. In this regard, the experience of a range of initiatives will be relevant, and YOUTHREACH 2000 is likely to provide an appropriate umbrella for their mainstream adoption. These include the following:

EU Innovatory Programme - Guidance for Young People: this is a FAS project, and is the mechanism under which Advocates were employed, providing direct support for YOUTHREACH participants to encourage progression from YOUTHREACH. It arose from feedback within the programme and from the recommendations of the ESF Programme Evaluation Unit (1996). The primary aim of the project was to develop a tailor-made approach to career-path planning for early school leavers. The project has been independently evaluated, and the model has been found to be effective. Responses to the YOUTHREACH 2000 consultation were also very positive towards the model. In particular, the Advocates' positive influence on the sustainability of young people in progression is noted. It follows that Advocacy should be incorporated into ongoing provision for early school leavers. The operational and resourcing modalities of this development should be examined and tested by the National Co-ordinators, and proposals presented to the inter-Departmental Committee, and a timetable for national implementation drawn up. In the meantime, those presently employed should have their contracts renewed until the end of 2000, with a view to their incorporation into the general service when appropriate.

National Centre for Guidance in Education - Front-line Guidance for YOUTHREACH Staff: this is a Youthstart project. It involves the development of a training programme and process, and a third-level accreditation system for training taken by YOUTHREACH staff. It represents both an infrastructural and a programme development. The implications of pending evaluation reports should be considered by national management, with a view to finding mechanisms whereby the experience of the project may be disseminated.

Synergy - Towards a Second Chance School for Mallow: this is another Youthstart project, and has developed a model of mentoring. It is likely to be influential regarding models

of support for young people in employment and progression, and proposals for its maintenance should be canvassed. The outcomes of this project should be linked with those of a range of parallel projects funded under Youthstart and other mechanisms, towards a comprehensive model of guidance in YOUTHREACH.

Finally, important reservations were expressed regarding young people with drug problems and with other multiple disadvantages. Where does YOUTHREACH draw the line? Is it appropriate that some of the young people now being recruited onto the programme have severe emotional and behavioural problems? If so, are the staff appropriately trained, do they recognise both their responsibilities and their limitations, and is YOUTHREACH adequately resourced (particularly as regards staffing, expertise, supports and referral mechanisms)? At what point and on what grounds do workshop and centre staff refuse a referral, and when they do, what other options are in place? Once again, answering these questions is not in the remit of this report. However, clearly these are issues which must be resolved both at national and local levels, ideally through a process such as that envisaged in 3.1 and 3.2 above.

3.11 Literacy resources,

High levels of functional illiteracy among adults in Ireland have been highlighted by the OECD in recent years. It is now a national priority, and significantly increased funding is being devoted to its alleviation, especially among adults. Underpinning this initiative is the view that literacy is fundamental, not only to self-esteem, but also to active participation in social, economic and cultural life. In addition, in January 2000 the Minister for Education and Science launched the National Reading Initiative. This is intended to promote reading across a range of environments, including education/training, the home and employment.

Significant numbers of early school leavers have poor levels of literacy. In many cases they are poorly motivated to address the situation. Their early incorporation into the labour force is likely to lead to significant problems in the future unless measures are taken to tackle their low levels of literacy. Action may be envisaged at a number of levels:

3.11.1: Review

Given the different resources and conditions governing the development of literacy in the three strands of the programme, it would be appropriate to carry out a review of existing provision at the earliest possible juncture. The headings below indicate the main areas of enquiry in such a review. It is particularly important that anomalies be identified and addressed, as well as lacunae in services.

3.11.2: Policy

National management should establish a framework of agreed objectives, delivery standards and operational guidelines regarding literacy tuition, not only in YOUTHREACH, but also in all initiatives directed at young people with inadequate qualifications.

3.11.3: Resourcing

The anomalies regarding dedicated resourcing for literacy tuition between Community Training Workshops and YOUTHREACH centres, and between different CTWs, was referred to at 2.4.2 above. This inconsistency within the programme is unsustainable, and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. As a first step, the Department of Education and Science should review and evaluate literacy provision across the programme with a view to equalising this dedicated resource upwards to an accepted minimum required to achieve real and lasting change in the lives of the participants. These skills are so fundamental to self-esteem and to positive participation in life and

work that no cost is too high.

In this regard, it is noted that Travellers attending STTCs are receiving literacy provision for the first time, and the centres may be envisaged as an appropriate location in which Travellers increase literacy skills in a culturally appropriate environment.

3.11.4: Team development and staff training in literacy development

These and other developments in dedicated or specialist supports should be understood and delivered as part of an overall strategy within workshops and centres. This strategy should be explored and agreed by each provider team, and each member should be clear as to her/his responsibilities in the development of participants' literacy and numeracy skills. Not all staff will be comfortable with this 'cross-skill' approach, and the need for a programme of staff training is accepted. In this regard, it is noted that FAS, IACTO and NALA have engaged in the training of CTW staff in front line literacy-development skills to promote an integrated approach to literacy development in workshops. This initiative should be closely monitored, with a view to wider dissemination across the programme.

3.11.5: Programme development

In the context of an increased emphasis on, and a team approach to, literacy development in workshops and centres, workshop-based programme planning will assume a central importance. The National Co-ordinators have observed many examples of best practice throughout the programme, and the considerable achievements of many young people in different certification arenas is noteworthy. As part of the Communications module, literacy is central to the NCVA National Foundation Certificate. In addition, FAS and NALA have designed modules which focus on literacy and numeracy development for inclusion in the Integrated Assessment System. Training for both systems constitutes an important mechanism whereby practice converges across the programme (and beyond), and in which the merits of different teaching packs may be debated. It would be useful for the National Co-ordinators to review this aspect of the programme, in conjunction with the NCVA, FAS and NALA, and with the programme's staff associations.

As regards teaching and training practice, the restatement of the programme's mission regarding literacy will demand a renewal of the integrated curriculum/programme approach. Not only will workshop teams have to review their literacy programmes, they will also have to review their other programmes and curricula to ensure that the literacy campaign is being developed across the board. In addition, the full range of delivery mechanisms should be utilised, including IT and open learning systems.

These developments should apply in both full and part-time courses, and should be incorporated in any future outreach provision, as discussed below.

3.11.6: Effectiveness

As regards the provision of literacy tuition in centres and workshops, it is not disputed that very effective work is being done throughout the country. However, in the absence of any screening mechanisms on entry, it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of provision. Of greater significance regarding consistency throughout the country, there is no way of establishing which workshops or centres are in greater need of support.

3.11.7: Outreach mechanisms

As indicated at 3/6 above, the programme will be conducting an increased proportion of its activities on an outreach basis. Accordingly, it will be necessary to develop

mechanisms to support young people in the development of their literacy skills in the workplace, in isolated environments, etc. This may involve a range of approaches, including visiting tutors.

3.11.8: Evening programmes

A key element in helping ex-participants who are in employment or progression, it is likely that evening programmes will be necessary. These may be delivered in YOUTHREACH Centres and Workshops. In the interests of partnership in a national strategy, such programmes should also be accessible to the wider community. There are over 150 of these centres throughout the country, most of which are well-equipped with computers. It makes eminent sense that they should be utilised as part of the overall national literacy strategy. However, some young people will be unable to return to their 'home' centre in the evenings. It will be necessary to develop partnership 'transfer' mechanisms within the overall programme. Equally, ex-participants should also be eligible to participate in literacy programmes in schools, community centres and adult and community education facilities *while retaining their status as YOUTHREACH participants*.

Finally, it is understood that these developments will operate in consort with other lifelong learning initiatives.

3.12: Tracking system/managed entries and exits

One of the abiding mysteries of the Irish education system is the disappearance of up to 1000 children each year, who do not make the transition from primary to post-primary education. The difficulties involved in managing a database of a million names is acknowledged. Nonetheless, the Department of Education and Science has been examining how its database may be developed in order to address this issue. Coupled with the activities of the proposed Education Welfare Board, this should ensure that young people are tracked through, and out of, the education system.

In turn, this should prompt concentration on the young people themselves, and on ensuring managed entries and exits from, and back to, education, training and employment. This is a clear recommendation from the consultative process and is consistent with profiles of participants, many of whom experience difficulties in transition. It is also consistent with the notion of longitudinal support, and takes account of the dynamic (and sometimes volatile) relationship that many of the young people have with education, training and employment systems.

Tracking is not simply a matter of ensuring that no young person is accounted for in her/his passage through and from schooling. It is also important in defining the broader group of early school leavers, some of whom will not participate in YOUTHREACH at any point, but all of whom should be tracked and where possible offered an appropriate service. It is also important in establishing the long-term or 'down-the-line' impact of the programme on participants.

There are models of good practice in the management of entries and exits. Two have already been instanced - FAS's Advocates project, which is in the process of being mainstreamed, and Synergy's Second Chance School in Mallow. Pathways, another Youthstart project, is another. In addition, it is also reported that schools are increasingly liaising with centres and workshops with a view to accommodating certain young people. It appears likely that the Education Welfare Board will establish a national context and pattern of delivery which will incorporate the experience of these activities. In the interim, and in the particular context of YOUTHREACH, it would be appropriate to review the issue

of tracking into and out of the programme.

3.13: Longitudinal tracking and support

The case made during the consultation for longitudinal supports is strong. The concept is consistent with the tracking system and managed entries and exits described above. The central issue concerns their delivery -

- What will they do?
- Where will they be located?
- How will they be resourced, and according to what criteria?
- Who will fund them and how will they be supervised?

A range of (largely outreach) activities may be envisaged under this general heading. Fundamentally, the longitudinal supports should be working with those young people who may be or who have been participants on the programme. Therefore, they include street work, gateway or satellite programmes, liaison with a wide range of local services, mentoring former participants in progression, etc. It may also include additional supports, including financial, for past participants engaged in progression training and education programmes.

A policy decision must be made as to where such services would be located. Already a significant amount of outreach activity is based in the workshops and centres, much of it unresourced. Locating these supports in the centres/workshops would be consistent with the recommendations of the National Economic and Social Forum, according to which 'health, guidance, counselling and support services should be "clustered" around the programme'.

As regards resourcing, the concept indicates a separate funding line, analogous to that for guidance, counselling and psychological services.

3.14: Regional and local co-ordination

As outlined in 2.4.9 above, respondents also called for a range of other supports for the programme. The difficulty posed for the National Co-ordinators in fulfilling a wide range of briefs as well as adequately supporting over 150 centres was acknowledged. However, there was no consensus as to how the programme's direct providers could best be supported. A national resource centre was suggested, but where would it be located? And, bearing in mind the degree to which centres and workshops are diffused throughout the country, how would it be used? Another suggestion proposed a support team be established, along the lines of that established for the Leaving Certificate Applied. This is worthy of consideration, but where would it be located and how would it be staffed?

Yet another possibility raised was of regional co-ordinators. The submission emanated from the VEC side, rather than the CTW. It referred to the recommendations made in the ESF Programme Evaluation Unit report of 1996, and to existing models of regional co-ordination in City of Dublin VEC and County Dublin VEC. However, the ESF report was written at a time when Regional Education Boards were envisaged. They are not now on the agenda. Moreover, the VECs in question have the advantage of economies of scale. They provide significant numbers of places, and the regional co-ordinators are resourced from within their overall allocation. Difficulties may be envisaged with this proposal elsewhere, even if it were to be restricted to the Department of Education and Science's side of the programme.

FÁS, on the other hand, being a regionalised organisation, has no such difficulties and has

regional co-ordinators in each of its regions. Their establishment is a significant advance towards the concept of a more local co-ordination of activities. However, they tend to operate within a FÁS framework in general, and their function is largely to do with administration and recruitment. They do not fulfil the wider professional and programme development remit envisaged in the ESF Programme Evaluation report, and there are communications difficulties at local level in many areas.

Therefore, the core issue remains, i.e. the need for a more localised technical and professional support service for the programme. Consequently, the following **general recommendation** is made:

- That the sponsoring Departments examine the feasibility of joint local co-ordination;
- That the Department of Education and Science explore the feasibility of local co-ordination based in Education Centres
- That such considerations be informed by parallel moves towards local co-ordination of programmes and services for young people.

3.15: Funding mechanisms

If the foregoing is to have a meaningful prospect of fulfilment, then radical flexible funding strategies for education will be required for education and training in order to tilt the bias of the system towards equality of outcome. Given the increased difficulties reported as the programme penetrates further into levels of disadvantage, this is particularly important. As indicated above, two such strategies were identified, differential funding and longitudinal funding.

The first of these, *differential funding based on level of need*, was widely supported during the consultation process. However, its development and implementation is fraught with technical and professional difficulties. The assessment of need according to which such an allocation might be made must be based on appropriate and clearly stated criteria and (in the interests of transparency, confidentiality and coherent application of standards) must be carried out by competent professionals, answerable to appropriate local authorities and under the general direction of the national authorities. The difficulties of developing an appropriate model must not be underestimated.

This differential funding also argues for some form of observation/assessment in the early stages of a young person's engagement with the programme. It is accepted that some young people may not disclose problems until considerably later in the programme, when trust has been established. It is also recognised that some young people will not disclose at all because to do so would mean the break-up of their families. These may need to be factored into the funding mechanism.

It is also accepted that in practice some elements of this approach already exist. For example, the Copping On programme, and various contributions from members of the Garda Síochána, youth services, Area-Based Partnerships and Health Board personnel constitute an additional level of resourcing. So too does the availability of supports such as the Customised Training Option. However, these supports are neither universally nor consistently in place in YOUTHREACH. The questions arising are as follows:

- What are the actual needs of the young people over and above their general pre-Foundation education and training
- What combination of programme and service is required to address them

- What resourcing mechanism can be devised to respond appropriately and
- How can this be universal and consistent?

However, this is a critical issue and must be addressed if we aspire to equality of outcome for the most disadvantaged young people.

The second funding mechanism to arise during the consultation process was *longitudinal funding*. This arose from discussion of the many kinds of outreach activity needed. It was agreed that many examples of best practice already existed. When respondents argue that they should not be expected to resource outreach activities from their core training budget, it is difficult to disagree. The consequence is that they should be given a separate funding line for the longitudinal tracking and support of early school leavers and past participants who are in employment or otherwise occupied. But how might this be envisaged? The following represents one possibility:

A fund line	Core education and training activities
B fund line	Outreach work, including tracking, recruitment, advocacy, etc. May also include guidance, etc.
C fund line	Special programmes for exceptional groups or individuals

As with differential funding, many workshops and centres already have an embryonic form of this model in place. In other words, the precedents exist. Once again however, the issue concerns the management, administrative and operational implications of making this the standard practice.

While each strand of early school leavers' provision has traditionally had separate funding mechanisms, differences in these mechanisms, allied with variations in literacy provision allocated by the education sector to the CTW network, have made it difficult for centres to plan their activities. The funding regime for the programme should be clear, logical and consistent across the three strands. It should be based on the needs of the young people, and on the resources required to achieve the maximum positive outcomes for them.

3.16: Staff induction, training and career development

In any discussion of YOUTHREACH, the contribution of the staff to its development and success must be a starting point.

However, as has already been noted, there is a constant turnover of staff in the programme. This appears to be particularly acute among part-time staff. This is not a new phenomenon, and was noted in the 1996 ESF Evaluation Unit report. Consequently, there is an ongoing need to train new staff. It is accepted that those recruited to the programme in the past have been chosen on the basis of their experience, attitudes and empathy with the participants. However, this is not sufficient to sustain them in their work. Further, in the present labour market and given the salaries the programme offers, providers report increasing difficulties in recruiting staff with the appropriate levels of experience and empathy, especially to fill part-time positions. Three core points emerge.

Firstly, it is imperative that all staff receive an induction training programme. This is particularly important regarding staff recruited to teach 'subjects', for example in the Junior Certificate, or programmes deriving from the education system, such as the Leaving Certificate Applied. It is understood that those providing the latter are trained to do so. But YOUTHREACH is not the same as school, and new staff must be introduced to the programme's approach. In general this training should be carried out at local level. In this

regard, the consultation process heard of the inclusion of new YOUTHREACH staff (including full-time resource staff) in induction training for new staff by the City of Dublin VEC. The sponsoring Departments should emphasise the importance of such training to the programme's providers. At national level, common induction modules should be available and certain aspects of induction should be co-ordinated, if not actually organised centrally.

Secondly, staff training and support should be ongoing during the programme - this is not merely a matter of developing technical expertise. It is intrinsic to the programme's approach, to the development of coherent team strategies and effectiveness, and to the maintenance and comfort of the programme staff. It is understood that many thus trained will use their expertise elsewhere in the education and training system.

Clearly, there are logistical difficulties to be overcome. A great deal of staff training takes place, some as part of national initiatives, some as an outcome of local or regional initiatives. Preparation for assessment and certification is another avenue of development. However, in many locations the programme is dependent on part-time staff, and particular difficulties attach to their participation in training. Furthermore, many centres have only two full-time staff, and it is rarely possible for both to undertake training at the same time. As the programme develops additional outreach facilities, this problem is likely to increase rather than decrease. Notwithstanding these difficulties, each workshop/centre should have a staff training programme combining local and national initiatives, and should report on this annually.

Thirdly, the problem of burn-out is of increasing concern to the National Co-ordinators, and was referred to in a number of discussions. It is important that those working in difficult situations are appropriately supported. In certain areas, the psychologists and counsellors working the workshops and centres have also worked with teaching and instructing staff. This is a human resource management issue, and VECs and CTW Boards of Management should be reminded of their responsibility in this regard by the Department of Education and Science and FAS. Furthermore, staff entering the programme, and particularly existing staff those whose expertise has contributed so much to the success of the programme, should be able to envisage their work in terms of a discernible career path. Notwithstanding agreements on pay and conditions reached in recent years, such a sense of security and the attendant sense of professional status and personal value still eludes many.

How are these issues to be resolved? Clearly, the greater the quotient of full-time staff, the greater the prospect of stability, maintenance of human resources and maximum impact of training. This is to do with the programme's staff resourcing, and is contingent on national policy decisions. It is thus beyond this report's remit. As regards the training elements, the programme has hitherto balanced national and local approaches. Similarly, a significant level of inter-agency training has taken place, particularly regarding certification systems and in the Copping On programme. In the main, however, staff training adheres to the departmental boundaries within which given centres operate. For the future it is appropriate to examine mechanisms whereby staff from all three strands can train together.

3.17: Research

The need for continuous research, both into the programme and early school leaving and disadvantage in general, is acknowledged. The research commissioned in recent years has been invaluable both in helping to understand the context in which YOUTHREACH operates, and in elaborating on a range of programme-centred education and training issues. Of particular significance were the enquiries into perceptions of guidance needs,

Junior Certificate results and early school leaving patterns in Dublin and Cork. However, two points may be made:

- Both FAS and the Department of Education and Science engage in research activities regarding the system in general. It would be useful, and should lead to a more effective deployment of resources, to develop a mechanism whereby YOUTHREACH is more clearly part of the consideration of such research. Reciprocally, research carried out within the programme's own remit should be more effectively linked to other research actions in education and training. This is a matter of communication.
- Research should be published.

3.18: The role of the arts

The importance of the arts in YOUTHREACH as a means of developing personal and social skills, promoting self-esteem and a range of transferable skills was strongly argued in a number of submissions. The National Co-ordinators have observed the positive benefits at first hand, through various YOUTHREACH drama, musical and visual arts activities. In addition, a number of projects, for example the Firkin Crane Youthstart project 'Youth Moves to Dance', based in Cork, have explored the introduction of arts-based activities to YOUTHREACH environments. However, the benefits of such activities are restricted by the availability of appropriately skilled staff, and the proximity or otherwise of theatre, music or visual arts centres or promoters. This is a field which needs to be further explored. In collaboration with other appropriate authorities, such as the Arts Council, the National Co-ordinators should review the experience of arts-based activities in the programme, with a view to establishing an outline strategy. This would be consistent with national intentions regarding social inclusion. As the Combat Poverty Agency/Arts Council report *Access and Participation in the Arts* indicated, few individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds participate in any of the arts. YOUTHREACH can, and should, establish a gateway to such participation. Such a review would form an important input into the deliberations of the recently announced Task Force for Arts and Education and the Arts in Education.

3.19: Intercultural issues/aspects

Two key developmental issues arise in this regard. The first concerns the participation by Travellers in programmes run in YOUTHREACH Centres and CTWs. It is important that all staff (including administrative staff) are sensitised to the issues arising and are appropriately trained. The second concerns the small but increasing presence of young people born outside the State, or from other cultures within. It is likely that, in line with the experience of other wealthy European countries, this group will increase as a proportion of the YOUTHREACH population.

3.20: Technical issues

The range of technical issues raised is acknowledged. The central issues are

- participants' *entitlements* to services, supports, allowances, etc.
- *access* to those entitlements
- *availability of information* to providers and clients on entitlements, on allowances and on a range of technical issues
- guidance
- delivery (which should be prompt and accurate).

Given the present labour market situation, and the level of income available to unskilled young people, a case can be made that the training allowance paid to participants should be

raised.

Other technical issues also need to be addressed, for example travel allowances. It is accepted that certain rural school buses are accessible to YOUTHREACH participants. However, the majority are not travelling in the right direction at the right time, and are not available at all when schools are closed. Yet, many potential participants either live great distances from the nearest workshop/centre, or must travel complex journeys in order to gain access to the programme. Their situation should be acknowledged - whereas the present travel allowances may be adequate to the needs of urban participants, they are not so for many in rural areas.

Similarly, there is a need to review and harmonise allowances paid to lone parents to ensure their operation does not act as a disincentive to participation.

The question of crèche facilities and provision for childcare also surfaced. There is already a significant expenditure in this regard. However, it would be useful to have a review of activities thus supported, with a view to ensuring equality of distribution and access, effective take-up of the training possibilities offered under the programme, and quality of service.

3.21: Youthstart and other projects

The issue of mainstreaming Youthstart projects was raised. This is a wider issue, involving as it does certain Integra and NOW actions, as well as a range of other pilot programmes funded by, among others, FAS, Area-Based Partnerships, the Combat Poverty Agency and the Department of Education and Science. These concerns raise a fundamental issue regarding the scale of pilot actions, and the degree of mutual engagement between the pilots, their funding providers and the statutory education and training interests at both national and local level. It should be that such projects have an interest in the wider implications of their actions and operate in a policy environment which is itself interested in the lessons of the projects and committed to their adoption, where appropriate. Regrettably, this mutual engagement is often absent. Pilot projects have become a path through which local consortia (generally in the community and voluntary sector) are enabled to deliver various programmes and services. In many cases, this results in duplication and competition.

At the beginning of the year 2000 there is a clear need to systematically address this issue. YOUTHREACH is a natural channel through which the experience of a significant number of Youthstart projects can be mainstreamed. A mainstreaming forum has been established by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment regarding the Employment projects, and all key players are represented. It is acknowledged that some projects have already been incorporated into YOUTHREACH. However, there is a danger that some projects may slip through the net.

In general, it is inappropriate for proposals regarding local actions to be made by project promoters to national management without their having been discussed and set into a broader local strategy agreed with local management. It is equally inappropriate for projects which effectively deliver a YOUTHREACH programme to be funded on a continuing basis by other Government Departments or national bodies without their being drawn under the general policy umbrella regarding out-of-school programmes for early school leavers outlined at 3.1 and 3.2 above.

Regarding the forthcoming European Community Initiative EQUAL, the National Co-ordinators should liaise with the ESF mission in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment towards the agreement of a general strategic framework to guide proposals

under the new initiative regarding out-of-school programmes targeting early school leavers. Particular attention should be paid to the articulation of measures and services at local level.

3.22: The active involvement of young people

The comments noted at 2.7 above concerning the involvement of participants in the general operation of the programme is acknowledged. Consultation of consumers is standard practice in other domains. The central issue concerns the mechanisms by which this can be achieved. Two of the National Co-ordinators participated in a Leonardo da Vinci project which explored this issue. The outcomes were ambiguous. For example, the participants do not necessarily wish to involve themselves with committees.

Each workshop/centre should establish a system whereby participants are directly engaged in an ongoing and meaningful way in the operation of the programme, and particularly in

- setting annual objectives
- disciplinary codes
- planning local projects and activities
- quality assurance and programme effectiveness.

The outcomes of this process should be published in the workshop/centre's annual report.

3.23: Local and community involvement

The positive benefits of community-level management committees and of the involvement of local schools, parents, local employers and community/voluntary organisations and leaders are acknowledged. Regarding VEC-run centres, it is recommended that they develop such a management support structure. Where possible, this should dovetail with other such local structures. Such a committee may be constituted as a sub-committee of the VEC under the 1930 Act. Regarding Community Training Workshops, it is recognised that FÁS has engaged in a substantial development process regarding management committees and has signed a new Agreement to Collaborate between FÁS and CTWs. A further protocol has been drawn up which recognises and resources IACTO in a new and pivotal role as the National Support Body for the Boards of Management of CTWs.

3.24: Quality assurance

Quality and effectiveness is a central issue in all education and training programmes. In this regard, the value of the present consultative process is recognised, and YOUTHREACH should engage in such a national programme re-evaluation every five years. Bearing in mind the particular needs of the target group, it is important that the criteria on which practitioners evaluate their work should be appropriate. Towards this end, the National Co-ordinators should establish a working group to agree a general framework of quality indicators for the programme, and a general reporting framework should be agreed by national management. An annual report on the programme should be published.

As regards the centre and workshop level, diversity is to be expected in a locally delivered programme and, insofar as it represents an innovative and progressive response to particular local factors, encouraged. However, variation in the quality of the programme is another matter. Yet a concern with different standards, however rare, was a clear preoccupation with some respondents. Their concern is acknowledged. Accordingly,

- Each centre should establish, and/or re-negotiate its mission statement within local management and the staff team and between staff and participants. This exercise

should be repeated every three years (or sooner if there is a significant turnover of staff)

- Teams should also agree a range of protocols and policies governing key aspects of effective programme delivery. It is acceptable that this be done on a network basis. However, everyone should be involved and mission statements and policies should not be imposed.
- This, and the general framework of quality indicators agreed at national level, will provide the basis on which centres and workshops can evaluate their own performance on an annual basis. Their analysis should be published in a workshop/centre annual report. Where local management is responsible for more than one workshop or centre, reports may be aggregated. Reports should be presented to local management and made available at local level. VECs should forward a copy of their annual YOUTHREACH reports to Further Education Section, Department of Education and Science for circulation to the Inspectorate and the National Co-ordinators. Boards of Management of CTWs should forward a copy of their report to regional management and a copy to the National Co-ordinator (FAS).

3.25 Promotion/publicity

The need to promote and publicise the programme is accepted. However, it is the view of the National Co-ordinators that the most effective promotion occurs at local level, and that it is there that the principal promotional effort should be expended. Towards a general promotion, a number of documents will be generated at national level for dispersal at local level. The following are suggested:

- A summary of the programme in glossy format. *This will be circulated to every guidance counsellor in the country.* Workshops and centres will also be given supplies for their own local promotional purposes.
- A programme folder for distribution to local networks, in which the above summary may be held; each centre should also prepare its own profile for inclusion.
- A CD-ROM which can be used in presentations and also made available to other agents such as guidance counsellors. Consideration should also be given to a video of the programme's achievements. However, many centres and workshops have themselves produced excellent promotional videos. These are in themselves part of a quality process and it is the view of the National Co-ordinators that they should be encouraged and supported in continuing their locally-generated materials.

The YOUTHREACH Web-site (www.youthreach.org) refers to the entire programme. It contains links with a wide range of sites, including FAS, the Department of education and science, Scoilnet and the ESF. However, its centre profiles refer only to VEC-run YOUTHREACH centres with their own web-sites. It is envisaged that during 2000 it will be extended to all such Centres. It should also be extended to include CTWs and STTCs, and other initiatives targeting early school leavers, either directly or through Web links. At present the STTCs have their own website. Either way, all centres and workshops should be either represented on a single site or on three linked sites. This should be seen as part of a general programme development in ICTs.

3.26: Reconciling the national and local

As previously noted, YOUTHREACH is a national programme, which is managed and delivered locally. Such an arrangement allows for very significant energies to be released, and fosters a strong sense of ownership among providers. However, it also allows

inconsistencies in approach and quality to emerge. It is important that the different levels of the programme's operation 'play to their strengths' towards maximising the programme's possibilities. It may be argued that YOUTHREACH needs more co-ordination, vision and management from national management, that the national level should promote, stimulate, recognise and reward local initiative and local responsibility. The corollary is that the local must be more open to co-ordination, positive direction and collaboration.

3.27: Information and Communications Technology

As Ireland increasingly engages with the information age, there is an increasing risk that young people who are already educationally disadvantaged will be further excluded from optimal participation in the social, cultural and economic possibilities of the new technologies. Consequently, it is incumbent on programmes such as YOUTHREACH to offer these young people training options in information and communications technologies. The standards already achieved across the country are acknowledged, as is the increased emphasis on ICTs, e-mail and the internet in very many centres and workshops. However, as the programme moves into the 21st century, providers may need to envisage communications training models which challenge our traditional concepts of training centres. In this regard, the work of the Integra National Support Structure on the Internet and Social Exclusion is noted, as is the model of the Hi-W@y café, piloted by County Meath VEC and its YOUTHREACH centre in Navan. This is being mainstreamed at local level in 2000. However, in this instance mainstreaming should also include the dissemination of the model on a wider basis.

3.28: A new Framework of Objectives and Operators' Guidelines

The programme's founding documents date from 1988. They should be re-written in the light of the consultation process and to accommodate the significant changes taking place in Irish society.

4. YOUTHREACH 2000: Recommendations

A consultation process such as YOUTHREACH 2000, by its very nature, suggests as many questions as it answers. Some of the most enduring challenges identified fall outside the programme's own remit. They should be inferred and extracted from the foregoing text. As regards the programme itself, the following recommendations are made in response to the outcomes of the consultation process:

1. National Policy Frameworks and Management

It is recommended that

1.1, There should be **a single overarching national strategy for all out-of-school actions targeting early school leavers**. It should include a statement of principles governing these measures. This should include general equality of outcomes.

1.2, YOUTHREACH should be set in this overarching framework.

1.3, There should be **appropriate national management structures** to implement the strategy. Therefore, **the inter-Departmental committee should be reactivated and expanded. Actions targeting early school leavers in the 15+ age range should be placed under this committee's general direction**, in order to bring cohesion and consistency of intent, resourcing and standards to provision, and in order to oversee the mainstreaming of pilot project initiatives. As regards the committee,

- its membership should be extended to include representation from other Departments and sectors involved in actions aimed at the same general

target group;

- the professionals charged with co-ordinating the many and varied actions under its remit should be *ex officio* members;
- it should develop mechanisms whereby the target group's voice may be heard;

it should agree an overarching policy and strategy regarding *all* programmes and services for early school leavers, including principles objectives, management structures, operational strategies and programmes, communications and evaluation processes.

, Particular attention should be given to effective partnership and articulation of measures, especially at local level. The participants should always be placed at the centre of planning, delivery and evaluation.

1.4, The Inter-Departmental Committee should set targets and agree priorities regarding the implementation of the above strategy and the recommendations of this report.

2. YOUTHREACH 2000

Within the above framework,

2.1, YOUTHREACH should continue its mission in providing alternative pathways to education, training and employment for young people who have not benefited from schooling.

2.2, It should be a single overarching programme, with multiple modes of participation and delivery, including full-time, part-time and outreach.

2.3, It should continue to have two principal delivery systems, through FAS and VECs, and four strands - CTWs, VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, STTCs and FAS/Justice Workshops.

2.4, A range of programmes and projects in the voluntary and community sector (including area-based partnerships) which target early school leavers effectively constitute a fifth strand of YOUTHREACH. These activities should be brought under the general umbrella of policy for out-of-school initiatives aimed at those who have left school early. Accordingly, the National Co-ordinators and the Education Co-ordinator (ADM), in consultation with representatives of the voluntary and community sector, should

- prepare an inventory of such activities
- present a proposal to the Inter-Departmental Committee regarding the co-ordination of, and quality assurance, for this sector.
- Providers in this sector should have access to inservice training and other supports associated with the programme.

2.5, Local management should be within a 'district approach' and characterised by inter-agency collaboration.

2.6, There should be co-ordination of administrative and reporting mechanisms across the various strands of the programme.

3. The District Approach

3.1, The district approach, within which there are agreed local priorities and strategies, should be reinforced as the basis for local planning and management, not

only for YOUTHREACH, but for all actions targeting disadvantaged young people.

3.2, A model template or matrix of service needs should be developed, whereby providers can identify service overlaps and lacunae.

3.3, Consideration should be given by the appropriate Government Departments, to the preparation of a discussion document on the sub-national and local co-ordination of programmes and services for young people.

4. Structure, process and supports

4.1, The programme should have two general phases (Foundation and Progression) and four stages - Engagement, Foundation, Progression, Integration.

, The National Co-ordinators should prepare general guidelines regarding these phases and stages. In so doing, they should be mindful that linear and sequential progression is not always possible for the young people and that many of the most vulnerable young people have an extremely dynamic, indeed volatile, developmental trajectory.

4.2, The Department of Education and Science and FAS should develop and disseminate guidelines regarding part-time and outreach participation on the programme. In so doing, they should be mindful of likely developments under the Education Welfare Act, developments within Traineeships, etc..

4.3, The development of personal pathways, which the young person can pursue in education, training, employment and home duties, should be emphasised.

4.4, There should be a particular emphasis on **managed entries and exits**, from school to YOUTHREACH and from YOUTHREACH to other progression or placement. It should be accepted that it is sometimes better for a young person to leave school for another safe environment, before the relationship with the school has ruptured irrevocably, so that s/he might possibly return, at a later stage. It is acknowledged that the Education Welfare Act will have a significant impact in this regard, as will the 8-15 early school leaver initiative.

4.5, There is a need for the general provision of **longitudinal supports** to take account of the increasingly dynamic interaction of work and learning for the 15+ age group who are outside formal provision.;

4.6, Resourcing should take account of the increasing levels of disadvantage. Consequently, the concept of **differential funding according to perceived level of need**.

4.7, Ongoing innovation should continue to be a feature of YOUTHREACH at all four stages, as should enterprise development.

4.8, The programme should be set into a framework of adequate and consistent supports and linked services, at local and national levels.

4.9, The National Co-ordinators should consult with management and practitioners regarding the implications of flexible opening times, with particular reference to recording participation (for example on YOUTHREACH), capitation arrangements, supervision of learning activities, and evolving relationships with local communities and enterprises.

4.10, 'Gateway-type' activity targeting early school leavers should be evaluated with a view to harmonisation, mainstreaming and structural, resourcing and operational cohesion and towards the development of quality assurance processes. The

contribution to the programme of youth services and community-based projects should be acknowledged and embedded in the programme's operations.

5. Programme and curriculum development

5.1, The National Co-ordinators should review the programme's curricular priorities to ensure they reflect the programme changes indicated by the consultation process. In particular, they should maintain close contact with the national certification bodies and the national Qualifications Authority when it is established regarding the certification arrangements for early school leaver programmes, and support and monitor their implementation at local level by workshops and centres.

5.2, In line with recommendations at 8 below, and in partnership with management and practitioners, the National Co-ordinators should review the programme and curricular implications of policy changes on literacy.

5.3, As regards the need for an intercultural dimension for the programme, in the first instance, the National Co-ordinators should establish a consultative process to draw up a general strategy. This should be embodied in a set of guidelines for the programme, with particular reference to

- participation by Travellers
- young people from other countries
- sensitisation of administrative and instructional staff

5.4, As regards the arts in YOUTHREACH: the National Co-ordinators should establish a working group of practitioners to

- review the experience of arts-based activities in the programme with a view to establishing an outline strategy
- link with the Task Force for the Arts and Education and the Arts in Education

Consideration should also be given to the establishment of a joint project between YOUTHREACH and the Arts Council to promote participation in the arts by young people in the programme. This would be consistent with national policies on social inclusion, participation in the arts. It could be jointly funded by the sponsoring Departments and the Arts Council. Copping On is an operational model.

5.5, The National Co-ordinators should set up a mechanism to establish and maintain an inventory of materials found to be effective in the programme.

6. Participants as unqualified young workers

6.1, A multi-agency task force should be convened to develop a strategy to identify, prioritise and address the lifelong learning needs of unqualified young workers.

6.2, The National Co-ordinators should consult with providers, certification authorities and the social partners towards agreement of a programme/curriculum development initiative targeting young unqualified workers.

6.3, Appropriate supports should be put in place to support these young people in sustaining the transition into working life.

6.4, The lifelong learning needs of unqualified young workers should be a key priority in the development of national agendas on social inclusion and on EU-funded initiatives such as EQUAL and Interreg.

7. Guidance, counselling and psychological services

7.1, Existing levels of support for guidance, counselling and psychological services should be maintained, and increased as resources allow. Additional resources to recruit expertise in drugs counselling should be allocated to centres in Drugs Task Force areas.

7.2, Activities delivered under existing funding mechanisms in 1998 and 1999 for guidance, counselling and psychological services should be evaluated regarding access, relevance and quality of service, national pattern and cohesion.

7.3, The National Co-ordinators should examine the implications of including the voluntary and community sector strand of YOUTHREACH in the allocation of resources for psychological services, guidance and counselling. In so doing, they should be mindful of the need to integrate with other services, for example those delivered by the Health Boards.

8. Literacy

8.1, The Department of Education and Science should review and evaluate existing literacy provision in YOUTHREACH with a view to equalising this dedicated resource upwards to an accepted minimum required to achieve real and lasting change in the lives of the participants.

8.2, In parallel, national management should establish a framework of agreed objectives, delivery standards and operational guidelines regarding literacy tuition, not only in YOUTHREACH, but also in all initiatives directed at young people with inadequate qualifications.

8.3, The development of literacy skills should be a YOUTHREACH priority.

8.4, Each centre should develop and record its literacy strategy. This should include a review of how literacy is developed in all aspects of the centre/workshop's activities. Centres should review and report on their implementation of this strategy on an annual basis.

8.5, The National Co-ordinators should formulate a strategy to develop integrated approaches to literacy development, in consultation with programme staff and bodies such as NALA.

8.6, The National Co-ordinators should consult with a wide range of expertise with a view to developing appropriate strategies to address the literacy needs of YOUTHREACH participants who are catered for on an outreach basis. Those consulted should include Adult Education Officers, youth services, community education providers, adult literacy organisers and Partnership Education Co-ordinators, expert organisations such as NALA, and the voluntary and community sector.

9. Funding

9.1, In line with recommendations elsewhere in this report, resourcing arrangements should be reviewed across the programme, with a view to eliminating anomalies. Funding should be consistent and predictable across the programme.

9.2, The National Co-ordinators should conduct a feasibility study on the concept of *differential funding based on need*.

9.3, The National Co-ordinators should prepare a report and recommendations on the feasibility of *longitudinal support* as described elsewhere in this report.

10. Staff training and support

10.1, VECs and CTW Management Committees should be mindful of the need to maintain multi-skilled and interdisciplinary teams in their workshops and centres. Those recruited should have a strong commitment to person-centred education and training, and to working with young early school leavers. Staff should be supported and good work acknowledged.

10.2, Staff training should be encouraged at all levels and across all strands. Inter-agency participation should be encouraged at national and local level, in order to disseminate good practice and promote a common perspective.

10.3, A general framework for a staff induction programme should be agreed by the National Co-ordinators, in consultation with programme management and staff.

10.4, Particular attention should be paid to staff information and training processes to develop appropriate skill and coping mechanisms required by those dealing with extreme disadvantage.

10.5, In consultation with VECs and FAS Regional Management, the National Co-ordinators should develop guidelines regarding the support of staff working on the programme.

10.6, With regard to staff training strategies,

10.6.1, Whereas general training strategies will be developed at national level, they should be delivered at local level, where possible;

10.6.2, inter-agency training should be encouraged where practicable;

10.6.3, the needs of those providing YOUTHREACH and associated activities in the voluntary and community sector should not be neglected.

11. Active involvement of young people:

Each workshop/centre should establish a system whereby participants are directly engaged in an ongoing and meaningful way in the operation of the programme, and particularly in

- setting annual objectives
- disciplinary codes
- planning local projects and activities
- quality assurance and programme effectiveness reviews.

, The outcomes of this process should be published in the workshop/centre's annual report.

12. Centre-based planning - quality assurance

12.1, In consultation with programme management and practitioners, the National Co-ordinators should agree a framework of quality indicators and quality assurance processes for the programme.

12.2, In this regard, they should be mindful that extremely disadvantaged young people may find it difficult to achieve certain outcomes, such as certification and placement or progression. The other benefits deriving from their participation should be recorded and acknowledged as successful outcomes.

12.3, Each centre should develop and adopt a team approach. This should include

- A mission statement, or other expression of fundamental objectives and philosophy
- Centre/workshop-based quality indicators
- a workshop/centre plan
- appropriate review processes, including active involvement of the participants
- an annual report.

12.4, In the development of the above, centres and workshops should place the young person, and the outcomes of her/his participation at the centre of all objectives, plans, processes and reviews.

13. Technical issues

13.1, Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure cohesion across a range of technical issues across the programme (for example trainee holidays), and adequacy of information regarding entitlements.

13.2, Allowances should be structured in such a way as to accommodate the particular needs of those living in isolated areas.

13.3, Minimum standards of centre accommodation should be set out in common guidelines.

13.4, There should be consistency of reporting mechanisms across the programme.

14. Research

The National Co-ordinators and the sponsoring Departments should continue to conduct research on an ongoing basis into both the programme's operation and national and regional contexts and phenomena relevant to its operation. Bearing constraints of time and support staff, this is likely to be on an external contract basis. The programme of research should be agreed on an annual basis, and funded accordingly. The National Co-ordinators should publish the outcomes of research as appropriate.

15. ICTs

15.1, Information and communications technology should be a central feature of all YOUTHREACH provision. All centres and workshops should

- be on-line
- have internet access, and encourage internet use by programme participants
- have a workshop or centre web-site
- be linked to the national YOUTHREACH web-site, and to others as appropriate
- be equipped to the highest possible standards

15.2, In regard to the foregoing, specifications should be drawn up by NOTE

15.3, Consideration should be given by the responsible Departments and national agencies to the formulation of a strategic plan to combat the risk of social exclusion attending the information society.

16. Lone parents

The National Co-ordinators should establish an expert focus group towards meeting the particular needs of lone parents in YOUTHREACH. This will involve the following:

- hearing and articulating the experience of the young people, and learning of their particular difficulties
- the exploration and dissemination of effective responses and support mechanisms,
- programme development
- guidelines regarding adequate childcare facilities and other supports

, It should culminate in the development and dissemination of a general strategy.

17., Young people with drug problems

, The National Co-ordinators should convene an expert focus group to examine the question of working with young people with moderate or severe drug problems. Two key issues should be examined - YOUTHREACH's contribution to the National Drugs Strategy, and the implications at centre/workshop level. The major questions are likely to include:

- links with other services, in particular Drugs Task Forces
- working with communities that are at risk
- outreach approaches
- the difficulties of working with young people with drug problems
- processes for induction, maintenance, mentoring and progression of young people
- staff training and support
- whole-centre approaches (e.g. to psychological services, counselling); referral systems.

18. Mainstreaming pilot projects

A range of pilot projects has been developed in Ireland, especially since 1995, which are relevant to YOUTHREACH. Many are already in the process of being mainstreamed. National management, through the National Co-ordinators, should carry out an audit of the major project strands to identify models of good practice which have not yet been mainstreamed, with a view to their adoption.

19. Local and community involvement

, VECs should establish community-based management committees for YOUTHREACH Centres. Where possible, these should dovetail with other appropriate local committees. Members should have a track record of commitment to social inclusion.

20. Framework of Objectives and Operators' Guidelines

The programme's Framework of Objectives and Operators' Guidelines were drawn up in 1988. In the light of the findings of this consultation process, and the changed circumstances of young people in Ireland in the year 2000, these should be re-written. This process should be completed by December 31st 2000.

Appendix 1

YOUTHREACH – A Brief Outline

1. Introduction

YOUTHREACH is an inter-Departmental initiative for early school leavers. Participants are generally aged between 15 and 18 and have left school with less than 5 Ds in the Junior Certificate, or without having attempted the Leaving Certificate. The programme operates through a number of different strands – *YOUTHREACH centres*, funded by the Department of Education and Science and managed by VECs, *Community Training Workshops* funded by FAS, and *Justice Workshops* funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and FÁS. A similar programme in a culturally supportive environment is operated for Travellers in a network of Senior Traveller Training Centres. There is no upper age limit in the Senior Traveller Centres in order to encourage parents to participate, given the influence this exerts on their children's participation in school. There are 76 YOUTHREACH Centres, 47 Community Training Workshops, 6 Department of Justice Workshops and 28 Traveller Training Centres operating throughout the country catering for over 6000 trainees.

The programme is managed and monitored at national level by FAS and the Department of Education and Science. It is animated, supported and co-ordinated by National co-ordinators in the education sector and in FÁS.

2. Early school leaving in Ireland

The ESRI Annual School Leavers Surveys of those leaving second level schools each year show the following:

Year of Survey	Leavers in school year	Leavers with no qualifications	Leavers with Group Cert/ Junior cycle, but no Leaving Cert	All Leavers
1986	84/85	4400 6.9%	14500 22.6%	64200
1987	85/86	4800 7.29%	15000 22.8%	65800
1988	86/87	4400 6.6%	15500 23.3%	66500
1989	87/88	4200 6.2%	15300 22.5%	67900
1990	88/89	4600 6.8%	12800 19%	67300
1991	89/90	3600 5.4%	11500 17.2%	67000
1992	90/91	5200 7.8%	11700 17.5%	66900
1993	91/92	3400 5.2%	9700 15%	64800
1994	92/93	3300 4.9%	10700 15.8%	67500
1995	93/94	2200 3.3%	10,000 14.8%	67500
1996	94/95	2700 4%	10,400 15.2%	68500
1997	95/96	2200 3.2%	10,800 15.7%	68900
1998	96/97	2500 3.5%	10,800 15.5%	69700

In addition to the above, 900-1000 do not transfer from primary school, of whom a high proportion are Traveller children. Of the 10,800 who leave having completed Junior Cycle some 2,000 do not achieve

5Ds in the Junior Certificate. Higher proportions of boys leave school early with no qualifications (64% male, 36% female) and this pattern is repeated for those who leave having completed junior cycle but without a Leaving Certificate.

The 1998 survey shows the length of post-primary education before leaving school of leavers with no qualifications:

up to 1 year	12.8%,
up to 2 years	46.7%
up to 3 years	36.6%
other	3.9%

Of those who enter the labour market after school, the unemployment rate is 47.5% for those with no qualifications, compared with 9.6% for those with a Leaving Certificate. For unqualified leavers, significantly more boys (48.1%) than girls (38.9%) enter employment. A high proportion of girls in this group is classified as being 'unavailable for work' (20.3% of girls compared with 6.9% of boys). Gross weekly earnings are 30% higher for young males in this group than for females. However, when *hourly* earnings are examined the differential reduces to 15%.

The survey demonstrates that both the levels of education and the grades achieved have a marked influence on gaining employment and, in general, that higher qualifications and grades

- increase the chances of gaining employment;
- reduce the length of time spent seeking work;
- reduce the risk of unemployment and
- promote higher earnings levels.

3. YOUTHREACH – Programme structure and objectives

YOUTHREACH is the national response to the needs of unqualified early school leavers in Ireland, and offers a programme of integrated general education, vocational training and work experience. At present the courses are full-time and are available on a year round basis. A training allowance is paid to participants ranging from £28 to £70 per week, depending on age. Centres and Workshops are distributed throughout the country, mostly in disadvantaged areas, in both urban and rural communities. It is delivered in out-of-school settings.

YOUTHREACH is structured around two distinct phases:

- a Foundation phase which seeks to enable the participant to overcome learning difficulties, develop self-confidence and gain a range of competences essential for further learning;
- a Progression phase which provides for more specific development through a range of educational, training and work experience options.

Basic skills training, practical work training and general education are features of the programme, and the application of new technology is integrated into all aspects of programme content. The programme provides a strong emphasis on personal development, on the core skills of literacy/numeracy, communications and IT, along with a choice of vocational options such as Catering, Hairdressing, Computers, Woodwork, Photography, Video, Sports, Art and Craft, and a work experience programme.

YOUTHREACH is learner-centred and experiential. There is a strong emphasis on achievement and on developing the capacities of participants. The programme promotes the participants' sense of self-worth and identity, as well as pride in their abilities and work. It is an integrated experience – personal, communications and vocational skills are integrated in a curricular and experiential matrix. Evaluations report that participants highly value their experience on YOUTHREACH and would recommend it to others. 80% of participants progress to the labour market or to further education and training.

The *main objectives* of YOUTHREACH are

- Personal and social development and increased self-esteem;
- Second-chance education and introductory level training;
- Promoting independence, personal autonomy and a pattern of lifelong learning;
- Integration into further education and training opportunities and the labour market;
- Certification relative to ability and career options;
- Social inclusion.

4. Certification

Flexible, standards-based national qualifications systems have been developed by the NCVA and by FÁS. National certification is available at Foundation Level and Level 1 from the National Council for Vocational Awards, and a mutual recognition agreement was concluded between the NCVA National Foundation Certificate and the FAS/CERT/TEAGASC Introductory Vocational Skills Certificate. Holders of either certificate have access to the same progression options, and relevant modules under either system are recognised as equivalent for the purpose of certification. As part of the overall approach, modules achieved under the Junior Certificate, and the FÁS Integrated Assessment System are recognised as equivalent for the purpose of an NCVA award, provided the candidates are successful in at least 4 NCVA modules. The system also provides for issue of Records of Achievement for individual modules, which can be accumulated over time to a full award. Candidates whose entries fail to achieve the required level are referred stating the reasons for the decision, so that they may re-submit a completed/ revised portfolio at a later date. Provision for an appeals process is inbuilt into the mechanisms.

Participants are also entitled to enter Department of Education and Science examinations as mature or external applicants. Over 200 attempt all or part of the Junior Certificate each year. Their achievements are analysed and reported by the National Co-ordinators. Increasing numbers of YOUTHREACH participants in all strands have now begun the Leaving Certificate Programme as a progression option.

A wide range of other certification is also utilised in order to maximise the recording of achievement by participants.

5. Progression

The ESF Programme Evaluation Unit report on Early School Leaver Measures (1996) was critical of the progression options available to YOUTHREACH participants. This was due to a critical shortfall in the number of places available and to the lack of availability of national certification. Arising from the Mid-Term Review of EU Structural Funds, there has been a major expansion of places since then. 2240 extra places in FAS and the VECs were approved including the development of ring-fenced progression places and Bridging Measures within FÁS, leading to FÁS/City and Guilds of London certification. National NCVA Certification at Foundation Level was implemented in 1997. Level 1 certification was implemented nationally in 1999.

Progression policy within YOUTHREACH is focussed on

- the promotion of access to a range of options within FAS and the Education sector. e.g. Linked Work Experience, Level 1 training, Specific Skills Training, Community Employment, Bridging Measures, Traineeships;
- entry to Apprenticeship, with support from Bridging Measures where needed
- progression to VTOS, CERT, TEAGASC etc where eligible;
- progression options within the Traveller Training Centres and re-entry to mainstream education;
- opportunities to pursue programmes such as the Leaving Certificate Applied, with extension of the duration of the Progression Phase as needed for this;
- an increased focus on the networking of out-of-school centres with the mainstream system, encouraging the centres to act as brokers and mentors to facilitate successful progression. The initiatives under the Guidance and Counselling measure, the Bridging measure and the Advocate programme (see 10 below) complement this work;
- enhanced quality assurance in the networks through the ongoing training of trainers actions, the networking of centres, and the dissemination of good practice and learning from new

developments.

It is possible for trainees to progress from Level 1 or Leaving Cert Applied programmes to PLC courses, which are certified at Level 2 by the NCVA and from there to third level courses in the Institutes of Technology.

6. Socio-economic characteristics of the target group and profile of participants

Early school leavers are at high risk of unemployment, difficulty with the law and alcohol and drug misuse, as well as experiencing low self-esteem, and major literacy, numeracy and other learning difficulties. As part of the development work prior to introducing guidance, counselling and psychological services support in 1998, a survey of centres was initiated by the National Co-ordinators. Results were analysed by the National Centre for Guidance in Education. 65 centres responded, outlining their views on the development of the new measure and the priority areas for support. 35% included guidance as an area needing additional support, while 88% and 66% respectively referred to the need for counselling and psychological services. Among those who indicated a specific need for counselling support, the following reasons were cited:

Counselling Need	%
Substance abuse and related issues (incl. Awaiting HIV test results)	28%
Dysfunctional family background	23%
Crisis pregnancy, lone parent, increased teenage sexuality	9%
Learning difficulties	9%
Low social skills and self esteem	8%
Personal relationships counselling	3%
Bereavement Counselling	3%

, For psychological services, the reasons cited were as follows:

Psychological Need	%
Severe emotional/behavioural difficulties including offending, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour	25%
Support for those who suffered physical sexual and/or emotional abuse	11%
Suicide and severe depression	8%

7. Provision of YOUTHREACH Places

Successive evaluations of the YOUTHREACH since 1996 were critical of a shortfall of places on the programme. Following the Mid-term Review of EU Structural Funds in 1998 a substantial expansion of places was implemented. The expansion was intended to

- deal with the backlog which had developed
- provide enough places to cater for those seeking progression
- extend the length of the programme for Travellers in line with that on YOUTHREACH, and
- allow for the duration of the programme to be extended where necessary to enable the Leaving Certificate Applied and other forms of relevant certification to be followed within a YOUTHREACH setting as one of the progression options.

The expansion occurred side by side with a rapid fall in unemployment, and a rapid increase in job

opportunities even for the unskilled.

A **District Approach** is promoted, i.e. local consultation between all relevant interests to identify and prioritise area needs. This is to ensure complementarity between the work of VECs, FAS, youth services, Area Partnerships and other community providers in the delivery of out-of-school services for early school leavers. The District Approach provides for a local consultation process before any expansion of services or new provision is put in place under YOUTHREACH.

8. Take-up of places on the programme

FAS	Education	Total
Early School Leavers 1,865	YOUTHREACH 2,183	4048
Bridging Measures 1,334	Travellers 661	1995
Total 3,199	2,844	6,043

The buoyant labour market of 1999/2000 has generated new challenges for the programme. Centres report a higher turnover of young people and difficulties in retaining participants in full-time places in the face of the increasing demands of the labour market. Given their socio-economic background, it is not surprising that young people take up employment, however unstable. Arrangements are under way to introduce more flexible delivery options for the programme. It is considered vital that those who are tempted out of YOUTHREACH to enter work should be allowed continue their education and training on a part-time basis, so that they will not end up back where they started, unemployed and unqualified. Developments under the Back to Education Initiative, Bridging Training and Linked Work Experience will provide for an expansion of part-time options, or the redeployment of full time places to part-time mode where appropriate.

9. Good practice in YOUTHREACH

9.1, In the experience of YOUTHREACH, the key features of successful interventions with early school leavers are as follows:

- A focus on the holistic development of the individual, set in a learning environment which is safe, structured and challenging;
- a methodology/pedagogy which begins with the young person and places the emphasis on recognising and rewarding achievement rather than reinforcing failure. This is achieved through a process which is both participant-centred and participant-led, where the programme reflects trainees' identified interests and needs. Participants and staff are equal partners in the learning process;
- flexibility (at all levels – management, relationships, curriculum) and programme duration based on need rather than time;
- staff who facilitate and animate and are themselves open to learning.
- a team approach where there is a consensus among staff on the centre's objectives and how to achieve them, with consistent practice and a culture of self-appraisal review, and staff engage in a process of discussion and reach consensus on a mission statement, a set of centre/workshop objectives and the policies and practice which should underpin them;
- a strong community base and good contact with local agencies and an integrated area-based approach. This includes referral networks. There should be close contact between YOUTHREACH and local schools, FÁS, youth, health and welfare, probation, juvenile liaison and employment services, area based partnerships and other initiatives in the community. The cultural context of trainees and their communities should also be central to programme planning;
- national certification;
- provision of longitudinal supporting services – literacy and numeracy, Advocacy/mentoring, childcare, guidance, counselling and psychological services.

9.2, Programmes are most effective if organised on the basis of a curricular matrix in which each

teacher or trainer is implementing a range of trans-disciplinary curricular objectives (such as communications skills development, health and safety awareness, etc). In response to the observations of staff, who have identified a range of training needs in this area, the National Co-ordinators have placed increased emphasis on induction training and the development of integrated skills, including front-line guidance and literacy skills (see 10 below).

9.3, All YOUTHREACH centres integrate a substance abuse programme as an important part of the personal development element of YOUTHREACH. Programme practitioners have been included in training to use the 'On My Own Two Feet' pack. This issue is also central to Copping On (9.4).

9.4 The **Copping On** crime awareness programme is delivered in co-operation with the Garda Juvenile Liaison service on an ongoing basis. This programme encourages YOUTHREACH trainees, prisoners and ex-offenders to share their experiences, as well as developing close links between YOUTHREACH centres, youth workers and Juvenile Liaison Officers. The programme is aimed at helping young people to identify the factors which influence their decision-making (assertiveness, dealing with peer pressure, attitudes to crime, relationships, solving conflict, alcohol and drug abuse etc) understanding the justice system. A Resource Pack has been produced for staff providing the programme which features core skills within YOUTHREACH such as communications, group work, team approach, evaluation, co-operation with other agencies.

10. Programme Supports

10.1 Staff Training

Staff employed in YOUTHREACH come from a range of backgrounds, in teaching, training, industry, youth-work and social welfare. Evaluations of the programme have found that this mix has been critical to the success of the programme, resulting in a cross fertilisation of expertise from the different disciplines. Towards the support of practitioners, funds are made available for training on an annual basis. Under this umbrella, skill exchange workshops, seminars/conferences and training courses are funded. They focus on a range of themes relevant to the programme such as integration of literacy/numeracy into all subject areas, progression, management, staff development; drama, linking with other agencies, health and safety etc. Other developments include

- **Training in front line guidance and counselling skills**, initiated through Youthstart, led by the National Centre for Guidance in Education and advised by an inter-agency consortium. There has been a similar development in literacy integration, initiated by FAS and NALA and now including all the programme's various strands;
- national training for staff in programme assessment and certification arrangements and for the Leaving Certificate Applied;
- development of **Certificate, Diploma and Degree courses** in UL, DCU, NUI Galway and NUI Maynooth in the field of training and adult and continuing education; the fees of staff with no formal pedagogical training are paid to enable them to attend these programmes on an inservice basis.

10.2 Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Supports

Funding was provided under the Mid Term Review of EU Structural Funds for psychological, guidance and counselling supports for early school leavers in Community Training Workshops, YOUTHREACH and Senior Traveller Training Centres. The new service is being implemented in line with the recommendations of an inter-agency Task Force established to recommend a framework for the initiative. The Task Force identified the need for a continuum of services based on the following spectrum of needs:

Initial orientation/gateway
Vocational information/guidance
Advocacy/mentoring on progression etc
Front line counselling
Expert counsellor
educational psychologist
clinical psychologist

While providers were asked to prioritise from within this spectrum, the vast majority of applications identified counselling and psychological services as the key priorities in their areas, with the other aspects of the service being delivered by staff within the centre, by mentors in the Youth service or by the FAS Advocate service (see below). Provision has been organised on the basis of regional clusters, with YOUTHREACH, Traveller and Community Training Workshops generally pooling resources to ensure shared access to professional counselling and psychological services, timetabled to visit each centre, and overseen by a steering committee at local level. The service also provides limited support for staff on the programmes.

FÁS has put in place a network of full-time **Advocates**, whose role is to provide counselling and support trainees' referral, progression and placement options. The Advocates are regionally based, and provide a service for the VEC YOUTHREACH centres, the Community Training Workshops and the Senior Traveller Training Centres in their catchment areas. This measure was evaluated in 1999 and is being mainstreamed in accordance with recommendations.

10.3 Childcare

The Department of Education and Science has implemented a childcare measure to support access of parents to YOUTHREACH, Senior Traveller Training Centres and VTOS programmes for unemployed adults and early school leavers. VECs have been allocated funds to be used for

- direct provision of crèche facilities;
- purchase of places on existing community or commercial crèches, subject to payment of a maximum of £50 per week per child and
- payment of childminders, subject to a maximum of £50 per child per week.

Some 420 children (346 parent participants) are benefiting from the measure at present. The funds provided complement those allocated by ADM, and the Department is working closely with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to ensure a co-ordinated approach in this area.

10. 4 Other supports for YOUTHREACH

- Support for the **networking of centres** through the National Association of YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators, the Irish Association of Community Training Organisations, and the National Association of Traveller Training Centres;
- The strong emphasis on ICT development that has been a characteristic of YOUTHREACH will be maintained. A Web-site has been established for the programme. It is intended that each centre and workshop will have its own Web-site in due course, with localised technical support. Centre staff are being trained in using the Internet and this will be used as a vehicle for networking and the dissemination of good practice and materials.

11. Mainstreaming Youthstart

Employment/Youthstart funded a range of projects between 1995 and 1999. YOUTHREACH was directly involved with a number of these projects, as well as a range of other innovations. In most respects, Youthstart affirmed best practice in YOUTHREACH and piloted extensions of the programme's approach with more detached groups (socially, economically and geographically). Learning from Youthstart and parallel initiatives is being mainstreamed into YOUTHREACH where feasible, for example:

- the Pathways project for ex-offenders is being continued, supported by YOUTHREACH funding;
- the Kilkenny Youthlynx project has been integrated into YOUTHREACH;
- The Gateway process developed in collaboration with the National Youth Federation is being expanded within Community Training Workshops, and the FAS Advocate service is being mainstreamed
- Youthstart has been used to provide front line training in guidance and counselling skills for staff in YOUTHREACH

- The URBAN pilot of the Youth Training and Support Unit in Clondalkin has been mainstreamed within YOUTHREACH
- The Navan [Hi-w@y](#) Café programme is being continued.

12. Future Developments

A range of developments is envisaged in the spheres of education, training and employment services. They will significantly affect the environment in which YOUTHREACH operates. Over and above those already noted in the text, these include

12.1.; **Actions funded under the Employment and Human Resources Operational Programme** of the National Development Plan 2000-2006 under the headings of labour market training and social inclusion.

These will include the Back to Education Initiative, the National Adult Literacy Strategy, Early School Leavers Progression, Sectoral Entry Training for Early School Leavers and Long-Term Unemployed, the School Completion Measure, and the Action Programme for the Unemployed.

These measures share a range of common objectives. They are intended to take account of the dynamic nature of the Irish labour market, and the need to offer more open, flexible opportunities for acquiring skills in general training and education, for example bridging programmes for those seeking entry to apprenticeship.

By way of example, the **Back to Education Initiative** was signalled in the Green Paper: *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning* and is now included in the National Development Plan. Its priority is to provide second chance options for *young people and adults* who left school with less than upper second level education. Provision will be modular, and will provide for the accumulation of credits towards qualifications. It is envisaged that courses will be provided in the mornings, at night, on weekends or on a sandwich basis in line with local demand. The objective is to ensure flexibility in the system to enable people to upgrade their skills, to attract those who do not access full-time programmes, and to facilitate the chance to combine the attainment of education and training qualifications with work or family responsibilities. As part of the arrangements barriers related to the progression of YOUTHREACH participants in the 18-20 age category which existed to date in the education sector are being removed. A sum of £1.027 billion has been provided for the period 2000-2006 for the Back to Education Initiative, comprising existing full-time PLC, VTOS and YOUTHREACH/Traveller programmes allied with a major expansion of part time options.

12.2.; There will also be measures under the **Regional Operational Programmes**. Among these will be Childcare, Community Development and Family Support, the establishment of 'Probation and Development Centres in high risk communities', and youth service programmes funded through the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform (Garda Juvenile Diversion Projects). The National Development Plan also encompasses measures funded under the **Peace programme**, and the **Community Initiatives URBAN and EQUAL**.

12.3.; **The Educational Welfare Bill**.

At the time of writing, this is at Committee stage in the Dáil. When enacted it will raise the school leaving age to 16 or completion of three years post primary education and provide for the establishment of an educational welfare service to monitor attendance and intervene to support cases where pupils are at risk. Under the legislation, approved out-of-school education and training programmes, such as YOUTHREACH will be designated as meeting the requirements of the Act. The Act also provides for the sharing of data between relevant agencies for tracking, placement or research purposes. The development of an educational welfare service will have a key bearing on YOUTHREACH. It will ensure that those at risk are tracked systematically and enable data to be shared between the relevant agencies, and that the programme is part of the continuum of services to respond to these young people's needs.

12.4, The National Qualifications Authority

The National Qualifications Authority has been established by the Qualifications (Education and Training) Bill 1999. Under its remit, a single qualifications framework is to be established which will unify qualifications issued by a range of bodies. This will facilitate lifelong learning, and the accumulation and renewal of qualifications.

Appendix 2 – The Originating Document

YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process

Dear Colleague

Attached please find a document *YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process*. It is not a proposal, nor is it a decision. It is a prompt, intended to initiate discussion regarding the future shape of the programme in which we are all involved. The issues raised and should be discussed at centre/workshop level, by local management, within particular management frameworks, such as FAS and VECs, and by professional networks such as IACTO and the National YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators Association. We think it particularly important that the subject of YOUTHREACH 2000 be discussed in local and regional contexts and that a district approach be adopted. It should be noted that 'YOUTHREACH' refers to the joint Department of Education and Science and Department of Enterprise and Employment initiative, regardless of context, ie CTW, YOUTHREACH Centre or Senior Traveller Training Centre.

We encourage feedback and will endeavour to consult with as many as possible.

It is intended that this process will lead to a more substantial proposal document to be published in April.

We look forward to hearing your views.

Dermot Stokes

National Co-ordinator

YOUTHREACH

Dept Education and Science

C/o CDU

Sundrive Road

Dublin 12

Tel: 01-4535487

Fax: 01-4537659

e-mail: dermot.stokes@cdu.cdvec.ie

Guss O'Connell

National Co-ordinator

YOUTHREACH

FÁS

Upper Baggot Street

Dublin 4

01-6070500

01-6070628

fasnrc@iol.ie

March 11th 1999

YOUTHREACH 2000 - A Consultative Process

1. Introduction

YOUTHREACH was launched in October 1988 by Bertie Ahern and Mary O'Rourke. At the time they were respectively Minister for Labour and Minister for Education. The programme drew together a number of strands from the education and training spheres. The network of Community Training Workshops was already in place, and the first

YOUTHREACH Centres as such were opened in February and March 1989.

Now, a decade later, there are over 70 YOUTHREACH Centre programmes, 45 Community Training Workshops and 27 Senior Traveller Training Centres, as well as six Justice Workshops. A broad range of courses is provided, and a range of key supports has been developed. By way of illustration, the NCVA did not exist when YOUTHREACH was first launched and incareer development, guidance services and information technologies are now features of YOUTHREACH.

Ten years on, it is possible to discern three broad phases to the programme's development. During the first years, the programme was established, developed and consolidated. In the second, from 1993-7, Workshops and Centres reported waiting lists, certification mechanisms were developed and a range of new delivery and support needs were identified, both by staff and by evaluation reports. Moreover, questions were raised concerning the simplicity of the early definition of early school leaving.

The third phase has been characterised by increased labour market activity - early school leaving has increased nationally while youth unemployment has fallen. Young people are taking jobs earlier and with lower levels of qualification. Waiting lists are shorter in workshops and centres, where they exist at all, and providers are developing more innovative ways of working with young people to take account of the dynamism and volatility of the labour market.

In parallel, other positive developments may be seen. These include the increasing range of progression options opening up for YOUTHREACH participants, and the focused supports available, such as national certification frameworks, guidance and counselling resources, advocates, and so on. They also include the range of innovations and models emerging from **Youthstart, Leonardo da Vinci**, the Combat Poverty Demonstration Programme and the Department of Education and Science's 8-15 Initiative. Policy frameworks are developed in the White Paper Human Resource Development and the recent Green Paper on Adult Education. Above all, it is now accepted that educational disadvantage is a central issue, and hence the recognition of the importance of the work done in the programme.

This is the point that YOUTHREACH has arrived at. Ten years old, and looking forward to the next decade. Early school leaving may have changed but, as recent research demonstrates, it hasn't gone away. So, how will the programme evolve to meet the challenges of the next ten years? These will include changes accruing from policy decisions, such as the National Education Psychological Service, the forthcoming Education Welfare Service, changes in the school-leaving age, developments in the Employment Services, changes in the law regarding conditions of employment of young people, etc.

As the Minister for Education and Science Micheál Martin, and the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mary Harney engage with the planning and negotiation of the next Operational Programme, what are the key messages coming from practitioners and regional and local managers concerning YOUTHREACH and how it should develop to respond to the needs of the young people at whom it is aimed?

This document is an opening statement in a consultation process. It is intended as a trigger to discussion. It is not a blueprint. We want practitioners to respond, individually and collectively. We envisage responses and submissions being sent by the end of March, and a more comprehensive document, encompassing the views expressed, being completed shortly afterwards. The National Co-ordinators will endeavour to meet groups where possible during the month of March. Networks such as IACTO and the National Association of YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators should consult and debate through their respective regional and national channels. Staff in centres and Workshops should also be involved, as

should participants.

The following is merely the skeleton of a possible model. Is it appropriate? And how might the many and various elements and innovations be incorporated, harmonised and delivered to maximise their effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the programme? We want to hear the views of those who operate the programme, those who manage it, those who participate in it and those who observe it.

2. YOUTHREACH 2000

In describing developmental stages, and in the illustration below, it is accepted that young people move in and out of programmes and may even repeat modules. Insofar as the text and illustration (below) imply an overly simple linear progression, readers should see this as the compiler's weakness in computer graphics, rather than his intent!

2.1, Should the programme be restated to comprise two broad phases - Foundation and Progression - encompassing four general developmental stages - orientation (first-base); foundation; transition and progression, as follows?

----- Foundation ----->

, -----Progression ----->

, <----- generally centre-based ----->

2.2, In each of the foregoing stages of development (which mirror the Youthstart Comprehensive Pathway), should the programme allow *a range of different modes of participation*, for example:

- I. Full time (as per classic model)
- II. Part-time
- III. Dispersed (ie participating as an external trainee/student, as is the practice in VTOS)
- IV. Specialised Groups (eg lone parents, travellers, drug abusers, young offenders, etc). Programmes must be specially designed for these groups
- V. Work-based education and training (for example a YOUTHREACH Foundation Traineeship) - for young people who are in-and-out of employment

2.3, The programme should have *a range of underpinning and cross-pinning supports*. But what might these be? Are the following appropriate? How would they operate in the interests of participants?

2.3.1, Links at local service level with other measures targeting educational disadvantage;

2.3.2, Operational partnership at local level between schools, the proposed Educational Welfare Service, employment services, youth services, health services and area-based partnerships (and local authorities, insofar as the partnerships are not incorporated into new local government structures)

2.3.3, Longitudinal tracking; before, during and after the programme

2.3.4, Psychological services, guidance and counselling; and vocational guidance - a spectrum of

provision is envisaged, co-ordinated at national and particularly at local level (including psychologists, counsellors, advocates, etc);

2.3.5, Web-sites and internet access in all centres; a general emphasis on information and communications technology for learning, administration and promotion

2.3.6, Incareer development for staff and other staff supports

2.3.7, Full range of certification/qualifications

2.3.8, Transnational links, through new Community Initiatives under the ESF and through programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci II and Socrates II

2.3.9, Programme development

2.3.10, Quality and effectiveness processes

2.3.11, Other technical supports, including research and dissemination

2.3.12, A lifelong learning approach to Foundation and Progression phases, providing and supporting recurrent opportunities through a range of mechanisms and targeted approaches, such as the Customised Training Option (developed by FÁS) and similar actions funded by Area-Based Partnerships.

3. Explanatory Memorandum

3.1, Restating the Programme

3.1.1, The definition of early school leaving

YOUTHREACH was established to work with young people who left school at or about the minimum school leaving age without qualifications. Is this still appropriate? What about those who leave during Senior Cycle or those who leave with less than 5Ds from their Leaving Certificate, and who are also experiencing difficulties in the labour market? Should the YOUTHREACH brief be extended to include these, or should they be catered for in schools and training centres? Is there a risk of diluting the programme's mission? Might it be 'colonised' to the detriment of its core target group?

And what of those early school leavers who never make it to YOUTHREACH? How should the programme respond to their needs?

Those who have not yet reached the legal school leaving age are another major issue in many areas. Should YOUTHREACH work within the compulsory school leaving age range? If so, how?

3.1.2, Developmental stages

As defined, YOUTHREACH comprises two phases, Foundation and Progression. Should these be restated to encompass developmental stages? (Orientation, or first-base; foundation, transition and progression). *Induction*, at the beginning, and *transition* at the end, of the Foundation phase are described in the operational guide in some detail. They are recognised as being integral to any programme and are consistent with the comprehensive pathway model developed in Youthstart. However, Progression has never been clearly defined, much less broken down into stages. How might the two phases be better described? How might they more accurately be defined to reflect the experience of the programme and the needs of the participants? How might participants' entitlement to progression best be delivered, managed and supported?

3.2, Flexible options to reflect the needs of the participants

From the beginning, reservations were expressed about the ability of some early school leavers to successfully participate in a full-time programme. A new factor has

entered this debate in recent years, as employers and training providers recruit less skilled and motivated young people. Furthermore, as waiting lists disappear and centres and workshops engage in more sustained fieldwork, YOUTHREACH participants themselves present more complex social and personal challenges. So, should YOUTHREACH provide for a range of different modes of participation?

3.3, A continuum of provision

According to the report of the Task Force on Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services for YOUTHREACH 'a team approach at local level to addressing the needs of early school leavers is regarded as the most effective'.

In the context of changes in structural funding, demands for service integration, newly established authorities, changing technologies and the need to mainstream innovations, how do we embed the good practice that has emerged in supports established in and around YOUTHREACH? How do we mainstream effective models of practice? How do we provide a comprehensive support system for all young people in transition? A wide range of supports exists. Some are available throughout the country, some are not. They include (in no particular order):

Advocates

Linked Work Experience Co-ordinators

Customised Training Support

Counsellors, Psychologists

FAS placement service; FAS Community Services; FAS training Services

VEC Adult Education Organisers

Area-based partnership Education Organisers; Other Partnership services

Adult literacy services

Literacy teachers (CTWs)

Local Employment Services

Mentors

Youth services

School-base outreach supports, (eg Home/School/Community Liaison)

School Attendance service

FAS client data and tracking system

Innovative programmes and initiatives, such as those funded under Youthstart, Integra, NOW, the Combat Poverty Agency, the Special Support programme for Peace and Reconciliation, etc.

Certification - NCVA, Junior Certificate, FAS Integrated Assessment System, CERT, Teagasc, etc.

Jobs facilitators (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs)

Probation and Welfare officers

Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers; Garda Community Officers

Health Board social workers

Other agents of statutory and voluntary bodies, and of innovative projects of various

kinds.

3.4, Possible co-ordination of supports

A number of major new policy making and delivery structures have been announced or are planned. Their introduction will have significant effects on YOUTHREACH. For example, it may be envisaged that the recently established National Psychological Service will be closely involved in policy formation and monitoring of delivery regarding guidance, counselling and psychological services. It may be assumed that in this process, it will interact with the National Co-ordinators. Similarly, a parallel and complementary role regarding employment service supports may be envisaged for the proposed National Employment Service. This may cover both service sites and service roles such as Advocates, Mentors, Mediators (etc.). The recently announced Employment Action Plan (EAP) could have a positive impact on progression and re-entry for over 18s. An operational interface with, for example, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs may be envisaged.

In the Information age, internet access and electronic communications will be essential in all centres. There will be a general emphasis on information and communications technology for learning, administration and promotion. On the Department of Education and Science side, the National Centre for Technology in Education will be involved in guidance and policy direction regarding information and communications technology.

, Regarding qualifications, it is intended that a comprehensive and linked framework of qualifications will be established under the proposed National Qualifications Authority. Many of the elements are already in place, and major vocational education and training qualifications authorities such as FAS and the NCVA have already established mutual recognition mechanisms

Regarding accommodation, the concept of multiplexes has been floated and well received at local and national level. How might such locally-based centres be established, developed, resourced and managed so as to be of maximum benefit?

Finally, how can the ideals of a district approach be delivered? In the NESF Report on Early School Leaving and Youth Unemployment, it was envisaged that clusters of services would be gathered around YOUTHREACH Centres and CTWs. Given the increasing emphasis in the public service on inter-agency collaboration, how will YOUTHREACH contribute to this process of service integration and quality development?

Appendix 3 - Key Reports

A broad range of opinion, policy review and research on the subject of early school leaving has been published. It takes many forms, books, papers, reports. It is not our intention to reproduce a bibliography containing all these publications. However, we wish to note the following reports and papers as particularly relevant to the report on the Consultative Process.

Department of Education (1995) White Paper: *Charting our Education Future*. (Dublin).

Department of Education and Science (1999) Green Paper: *Adult Education in an Era of Lifelong Learning*. (Dublin).

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (1997). White Paper: *Human Resource Development*. (Dublin).

European Social Fund Programme Evaluation Unit (1996). *Early School Leavers Provision*

(Dublin).

Ryan S./National Co-ordinators, YOUTHREACH (1998): *Perceived Needs for Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services in VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres.* (Dublin).

National Co-ordinators, YOUTHREACH (1998): *Report of the Task Force on Guidance, Counselling and Psychological Services in YOUTHREACH* (Dublin).

Ryan S./National Co-ordinators, YOUTHREACH (1999): *Junior Certificate Results 1998 in VEC YOUTHREACH Centres, Community Training Workshops and Senior Traveller Training Centres.* (Dublin).

National Social and Economic Forum (1997). *Early School Leavers and Youth Unemployment*; report no. 11. (Dublin)

Three additional inputs should also be noted. They were internal reports on early school leaving in Dublin City, County Dublin and Cork City, reports commissioned by the Department of Education and Science. They were prepared by CDVEC, County Dublin VEC and Cork City VEC. They were written by, respectively, Elizabeth O'Sullivan, Aideen Quilty and Patricia Doran, and Rory Sheehan.

Appendix 4: Respondents

The following made submissions and/or attended the consultative process open meetings:

Maureen Lynch, on behalf of Advocates nationally	Patricia Ryan, Advocate, Ennis, Co Clare
Noel Dalton, on behalf of Kildare VEC and YOUTHREACH co-ordinators in Kildare	Bob Keating, on behalf of staff of CYTE, YOUTHREACH staff Clonmel and Tipperary Town
Shivaun O'Brien, on behalf of staff at Drogheda YOUTHREACH	Gerry Griffin, on behalf of Senior Traveller's Training Centres
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service	Paul Large, Ballina YOUTHREACH
Stephanie Leahy, on behalf of National Association of YOUTHREACH Co-ordinators	Noella Manley, on behalf of the staff of Ashbourne YOUTHREACH
Stewart Dowie & Jacqui Caulfield, Ballymun YOUTHREACH	Aileen O'Brien, Advocate, Dublin South & Wicklow
Liz Harper, on behalf of Tallaght Partnership Ltd,	FÁS Internal Working Group on Early School leaving
Margaret Mc Skane, Monaghan YOUTHREACH	Dorothy Crinnion, Navan YOUTHREACH
Diarmuid Wilson, Cavan YOUTHREACH	Eugene Mc Ardle, Co Monaghan VTC
John Keenan, FÁS Monaghan	Marie Duffy, FÁS Monaghan
Anne Morgan, FÁS Monaghan	Sean Roche, FÁS NE
Eamon Murphy, FÁS NE	Noella Manley, Ashbourne YOUTHREACH

Aaron Fowler, Ashbourne YOUTHREACH	Mary Byrne, Drogheda YOUTHREACH
Shivaun O'Brien, Drogheda YOUTHREACH	Margaret Mc Donnell, Dundalk YOUTHREACH
Anne-Marie Murphy, Monaghan Youth Federation	Monica Ward, Monaghan Youth Federation
Rosemary Ward, Monaghan YOUTHREACH	Fiona Mc Caffrey, Monaghan YOUTHREACH
John O'Gorman, Monaghan YOUTHREACH,	Pat Conway, Regional Director, FAS Midlands
Michael Fitzgerald, FÁS Midlands	Stephanie Leahy, YOUTHREACH Ballinasloe
Anne Cuddy, St Brendans STTC Loughrea	Anne Mc Govern, FÁS Galway
Gerry Johnson, FÁS Athlone	Andy Gallagher, FÁS Tullamore
Sean Stakelum, St Mel's Training Centre Longford	Mary Byrne, Placement Services Tuam
Joe Langan, Co Mayo VEC	Sorcha Nic Dhonnacha, YOUTHREACH Tuam
Michael O'Doherty, YOUTHREACH Progression Roscrea	Bernard Hardiman, St Benins Tuam
Frank Brady, Athlone CTW	Kevin Feerick, St Catherine's STTC Ballina
Padraic Casey, Placement Services Sligo	Mary Frances Mc Inerney, FAS Shannon
Ray Kelly, CTW Newbridge	Sheila Smyth, CTW Newbridge
Josephine Dempsey, YOUTHREACH Miltown Malbay	Helen O'Sullivan, St Joseph's STTC Ennis
Doreen Stapleton, YOUTHREACH Kilrush	Patricia Ryan, Advocate CTW Ennis
D O'Donoghue, FÁS NW	Mary Carroll, St Colmcille's Travellers' Workshop, Tullamore
Anton Glynn, YOUTHREACH Longford	Bernadette Reilly, CDVEC YOUTHREACH
Pauline Kane, NCCCAP CTW	Jacqui Caulfield, Ballymun YOUTHREACH
David Farrell, Ballyfermot YOUTHREACH	Brendan Sheehan, South City YOUTHREACH
Paddy Robinson, Bray YOUTHREACH	Eileen Lennon, FÁS Crumlin
Bob Harris, FÁS d'Olier Street	Shay Byrne, Wicklow YOUTHREACH
Patricia Doran, Rathfarnham YOUTHREACH	James Brady, Lucan YOUTHREACH
Declan Clarke, Navan STTC	Dermot Handley, Advocate Tallaght
Anne Flynn, Advocate Clondalkin	Donal Sweeney, Darndale CTW

Maria Gregan, Newbridge CTW	Margaret Culloty, YOUTHREACH LCA Tralee
Michael O'Callaghan, FÁS Jervis Street	V Farry, FÁS
Margaret Byrne, FÁS Ballyfermot	Maureen Lynch, Advocate Co Kildare
Aileen O'Brien, Advocate Dublin South/Wicklow	John Reid, Tallaght CTW
Patricia Gaffney, Bonnybrook YOUTHREACH	Nell O'Brien, Rush YOUTHREACH
Maureen Murphy, Advocate Dundalk	Martha Bolger, Advocate Tullamore
Arthur O'Daly, IACTO	Gerry O'Shea, Dun Laoghaire CTW
Martin Kelly, FÁS Jervis Street	Nessan Vaughan, FÁS Dublin North
Concepta de Bruin, YOUTHREACH Basin Lane	Chris Heffernan, YOUTHREACH Transition Centre
Mick Mc Cabe, Youthstart Kilbarrack	Austin Wynne, Co Dublin VEC
Andrina Wafer, NCVA	Patrick O'Callaghan, FÁS Dun Laoghaire
Alan Morgan, Blanchardstown YOUTHREACH	Avril Burgess, NCGE
Terry Doyle, CDVEC	Kieran Heffernan, Co Waterford VEC
Margaret Mc Grath, Co Waterford VEC	Michael Crowley, YOUTHREACH Ballincollig
Maura Higgins, YOUTHREACH The Glen	Jim St Leger, FAS Southwest
Oliver Clancy, FAS SE	Gabrielle Danaher, Hospital YOUTHREACH
Nora Hennessy, YOUTHREACH Shanagolden	Willie Crowe, Co Limerick VEC
Bob Keating, Co Tipperary (SR) VEC	Brendan Ryan, YOUTHREACH Tipperary Town
Mike Fulton, FÁS SE	Joe Whelan, FÁS Clonmel
Jim Powell, FÁS Waterford	Ephraim Fitzgerald, St Francis CTW
Paddy Carlton, Manager Community Services SW	Peadar Walsh, Young Nenagh Project
Geraldine O'Brien, YOUTHREACH Roscrea	Antoinette Coffey, North Tipperary VEC
Luke Murtagh, North Tipperary VEC	Donal Griffin, FÁS Mid West
Michael Gregan, FÁS Carlow	Christy Glancy, Co Carlow VEC
Ken Lynch, FÁS SE	Betty Doyle, YOUTHREACH New Ross
John Brennan, YOUTHREACH Enniscorthy	Michael Allen, FÁS Wexford

Joan Browne, FÁS Advocate

Noel Colleran, City of Limerick
YOUTHREACH

R Collier, FÁS Kilkenny

Martin Stockdale, CTW Waterford

Eileen Coman, YOUTHREACH Wexford

Walter Pigott, Kilkenny CTW,