



YOUNG COMMUNITY LEADERS  
*Learn to Lead*

**Northside Partnership**  
**Young Community Leaders**  
**Pilot Programme 2011-2012**

**Final Evaluation Report**

01 December 2012



a partnership of communities, state, employers,  
trade unions and elected representatives

*An initiative of the*

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**A T L A N T I C**  
*Philanthropies*



**Cullinane Consulting**  
Human Resource & Change Management Consultants

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We are most grateful to our funders The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) for their support and guidance in establishing YCL and for their continued interest in the YCL Programme and its development. The funding provided by AP enabled us to pilot and evaluate the programme and the learning has enabled us to modify and improve the programme model in year two.

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Noel Kelly  
Programme Manager  
Northside Partnership, Young Community Leaders Programme

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1 Background

How do you encourage a group of young people to become the future leaders of their communities? Does exposure to leadership training and development equip young people for community leadership roles? What leadership opportunities are already available in the Northside area – and what leadership opportunities can young people actually create for themselves? This evaluation report seeks to answer these and other questions. It tells the story of the Northside Partnership Young Community Leaders Pilot Programme and it documents the leadership journey of the class of 2011/2012.

Young Community Leaders (YCL) is a Northside Partnership youth development programme funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies which aims to develop leadership skills among young people between 16 and 25 years from Northside Partnership's priority districts. Through YCL, participants received formal leadership training and development and practical opportunities to apply their skills in real community leadership situations. The YCL Pilot Programme design included the following components: The Pacific Institute, STEPS programme; the Foróige Albert Schweitzer Leadership for Life Programme (ASLFL); Restorative Practices training and dissemination; participant mentoring (provided by representatives of organisations in the area); Community Action Projects and the formation of a Young Community Innovators Group.

## 1.2 Findings and Recommendations

While the formative approach to evaluating the programme made it possible to implement changes and developments on a continual improvement basis, it is important to note that at all times, the evidence based programme retained fidelity in all aspects of delivery. Twenty four of the initial 40 participants completed the programme which is accredited by NUI Galway at FETAC Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The YCL Pilot Programme was successfully co-ordinated and implemented and participants expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the way in which the programme was structured and delivered. The majority of the selected participants were already involved in organisations in their community prior to beginning YCL and the results indicate that they strengthened and deepened their community involvement during the programme through continuing their original work and by taking on additional community based projects and initiatives. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the participants' development is the very apparent growth in their confidence and self-belief.

This evaluation report recommends changes to the recruitment and mentoring aspects of the programme, an acceleration of the introduction of Restorative Practices across the community and additional support for the work of the Young Community Innovators Group. In September 2012, inspired by the progress of the Pilot Programme participants, a new group of 40 YCL participants began YCL Programme 2.

The YCL Pilot Programme short-term outcomes are already evident. The Northside Partnership YCL team now needs to enlist the support of community leaders and the business community in developing a strategic funding plan to ensure the sustainability of the programme and to enable it to achieve its long-term objectives.

## 2. About Young Community Leaders

### 2.1 Northside Partnership and Its Priority Districts

Northside Partnership (NSP) is a local development company established in 1991 as part of the then Government's strategy to address long-term unemployment on the Northside of the City. While NSP's initial focus was on tackling long term unemployment, over the past 20 years the Partnership has evolved and developed initiatives in the areas of enterprise, employment, community development and education. Central to NSP's work is a clear focus on supporting marginalised individuals and marginalised communities. NSP's catchment area covers most of the postal districts of Dublin 3, 5, 13 and 17. To ensure that it directs its resources and actions to those with the greatest need, the Partnership has identified priority districts based on an ongoing assessment of Census Data. NSP's priority districts include most of Dublin 17 (the greater Coolock area including Bonnybrook, Priorswood, Kilmore and Darndale), and areas in Dublin 5 and 13 (including Kilbarrack, Donaghmede, Edenmore, parts of Donnycarney and Harmonstown). The attached maps highlight the areas deemed to be structurally disadvantaged or socially deprived, as opposed to affluent, as measured by the Pobal HP Deprivation (Haase and Pratschke) Index<sup>1</sup> (Appendix 1, Map 1).

NSP's priority districts have a higher population of young people aged under 24 years and a higher percentage of young people who have left school early with low or no qualifications (Appendix 1, Maps 2, 3 and 4). In addition to being less likely to progress to third level education, the young people who live in the priority districts are less likely to become actively involved in community life. In previous interventions, for example in 2011 when The Pacific Institute's PX2 Programme was offered to young people in the priority districts, it was NSP's experience that it was particularly challenging to find effective ways to engage with the 16-25 year age group from these districts.

A variety of community-based organisations and DEIS schools are located in the priority districts and these organisations and schools assisted by promoting the YCL Pilot Programme, sourcing comparison group members for the evaluation process, participating in Restorative Practices training and providing volunteering opportunities for the young people taking part in the Young Community Leaders Pilot Programme.

### 2.2 Developing Young Community Leaders for the Future

Community leaders are people who take responsibility (frequently on a voluntary basis) for the wellbeing and improvement of their communities. Community leadership requires consistent dedication and commitment. Prior to 2008, community and voluntary organisations in Ireland were reporting difficulty in attracting volunteers as the well-documented economic boom was conspiring to make our communities cash rich and time poor. While the Celtic Tiger is now a distant memory, a slight compensation for its disappearance is that due to increased unemployment and short-time working, citizens once again have more time at their disposal and are freer to offer their services to organisations on a voluntary basis. In a recent press release<sup>2</sup>, Volunteering Ireland reported that the volunteers who are currently signing up through their Volunteer Centres

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<sup>1</sup> [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)

<sup>2</sup> [www.volunteer.ie](http://www.volunteer.ie), Press Release, 11 January 2012

are predominantly young, with 62% of volunteers under 35 and more than a third under 25 in 2011. The volunteering Ireland website also reports that in this challenging economic climate, many have found themselves unemployed or underemployed as a result of the recession and that it is a particularly challenging time for graduates. With fewer jobs available and more job applicants than ever before, experience has become a necessity when approaching potential employers. Volunteering assignments can provide such experience.

Since its inception NSP has fostered and supported a vibrant web of community involvement in the Northside area and today's community volunteers frequently become tomorrow's community leaders. From its experience in working with marginalised people from priority districts, Northside Partnership is aware that when it comes to sourcing new leaders, additional support and leadership development initiatives are required.

In recent years NSP has developed a range of initiatives aimed at supporting young people from low income or welfare dependent households. These include education initiatives and more recently a Youth Leadership programme. While these initiatives have supported hundreds of young people as individuals, they have not developed the capacity of these young people to become the community leaders of tomorrow.

If NSP is to sustain the excellent tradition of community leadership in the Northside area in the long term, young people, particularly those from the northern neighbourhoods disproportionately affected by high levels of poverty, early school leaving and unemployment will need to be encouraged and developed. This means giving them the personal confidence and motivation to seek out leadership opportunities, the leadership skills to be effective in those roles and a working methodology to support them in whatever community challenges they undertake.

### **3. Young Community Leaders – A New Approach**

#### **3.1 Pilot Programme Aims and Objectives**

The concept behind the Young Community Leaders is a simple one. The programme identifies and selects young people from priority areas who have already demonstrated an interest in community involvement and gives them training in personal effectiveness and leadership as well as opportunities for leadership placements in local organisations, and practical support and mentoring from local leaders. On completion, participants receive a FETAC Level 6 qualification: "*Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action*" which is accredited by the National University of Ireland, Galway. In return, the community receives a new generation of volunteers and prospective leaders.

The Northside Partnership Young Community Leaders (YCL) Pilot Programme was inaugurated in May 2011, with the generous support of The Atlantic Philantropies. YCL represented a significant deepening of the Partnership's approach to supporting marginalised youth in priority districts.

### **3.1.1 The dual aims of the YCL pilot programme were:**

- To engage a group of young people between 16-25 years to participate in a programme of accredited leadership training designed to enhance their capacity, skills and confidence to engage in leadership roles within their wider community; and
- To Influence the wider community leadership environment so that young people are embraced as a valuable resource to be accessed by those in existing leadership positions in the community.

### **3.1.2 The key objectives of the YCL Pilot Programme were to:**

- Involve and support a minimum of 20 young people in active leadership roles in voluntary and community organisations.
- Establish a Youth Innovation Committee and youth role models and spokespersons.
- Establish a Restorative Practice model in a minimum of two youth settings.
- Generate a resultant incremental increase in youth civic engagement.

While achievement of the accredited training was the short-term goal it was envisaged that in the long-term, the community would see an incremental increase in the involvement of young people in leadership roles and that organisations in the community would in turn embrace the YCL methodologies [such as Restorative Practices] to be promoted by the programme. The YCL Programme Logic Model (Appendix 2) illustrates the inputs, activities, outputs and short and long-term outcomes of the programme.

## **3.2 Pilot Programme Management and Implementation**

Noel Kelly, Programme Manager in Northside Partnership had overall responsibility for designing, leading and managing the YCL Pilot Programme and is responsible for sustaining the YCL initiative in the future.

The Programme Co-ordinator, Carol Conway, managed and facilitated YCL Pilot Programme implementation, together with a team of three additional facilitators and with the support of a part-time administrator.

The YCL Steering Group included representatives of the Northside Partnership and the YCL Programme management and implementation team, and representatives of organisations actively involved in local community development. YCL Pilot Programme participants were also represented on the Steering Group on a rotational basis.

The composition of the Steering Group was as follows:

- Noel Kelly, YCL Programme Manager, Northside Partnership
- Carol Conway, YCL Programme Co-ordinator, Northside Partnership
- Matthias Borscheid, Ph. D, Local Development and Education Manager, Northside Partnership
- John Daly, Youth Leader, St Monica's Youth Centre
- Margaret Hession, Junior Liaison Officer, Coolock Garda Station Community Education
- Roslyn Palmer, Volunteer Co-ordinator, Northside Community Law Centre, Coolock



- Louise O’Neill, Young Leader
- Alice Plunkett, Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator, The Donahies Community School, Dublin 13

### 3.3 Pilot Programme Design and Components

To achieve the aims and objectives of the YCL Pilot Programme, the programme design team recognised that they needed to incorporate already-developed models of best practice into the design and partnerships with organisations such as The Pacific Institute Ireland, Foróige and CDI Tallaght were forged. If the YCL Pilot Programme was to be a success, the selected components would have to work together in a seamless way. Early involvement of experienced local community leaders and youth organisations was also a programme imperative. The key components of the YCL Programme were as shown in Fig. 1 below.



Figure 1: YCL Programme - Key Components

#### 3.3.1 The Pacific Institute STEPS® Programme

The STEPS Programme helps young people to recognise that they have choices in life. By understanding how the human mind works and how current beliefs and attitudes can shape our expectations for the future, participants learn that they are in control of the way they think, and can use that power to change the way they live their lives. STEPS is delivered in a group setting with a qualified facilitator who helps participants to co-create their learning through interactive discussions, personal reflection time and the use of short video segments, and activities which employ a wide variety of learning styles.

The YCL design team initially considered using PX2, the Pacific Institute’s youth programme which is specifically designed for 14-25 year olds; however, the team felt that the adult version, STEPS, would carry more weight with the older YCL participants. This proved to be the correct decision as the adult programme was well received by participants in both age groups.

### **3.3.2 The Foróige ASLFL Programme**

With support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, The Foróige Best Practice Unit has developed The Albert Schweitzer Leadership for Life Programme (ASLFL) which is accredited as a FETAC Level 6 award on the National Framework of Qualifications, from NUI Galway. ASLFL is evidence-based and the programme manuals are professionally produced in a format which is particularly appealing to youth participants. The ASLFL Programme recognises the innate leadership capabilities and potential in young people and gives them an opportunity to develop their skills and attributes in a fun and encouraging environment. The programme is for young people who have demonstrated good leadership abilities and who aspire to being leaders in the future. The YCL schedule meant that participants would complete ASLFL in a more concentrated time period than would be the norm for typical Foróige participants. As the ASLFL Programme is usually delivered by Foróige facilitators in Foróige locations, the inclusion of ASLFL in the YCL Programme was also a new departure for Foróige. The YCL Facilitators were fully trained by Foróige to deliver the ASLFL Programme. The fact that ASLFL is an accredited programme offering a “*Foundation Certificate in Youth Leadership and Community Action*” is a significant plus for the YCL Programme. In addition, the ASLFL Programme incorporates a Community Action Project placement which enables participants to put their learning into action in real community settings.

### **3.3.3 Restorative Practices**

Restorative practices is a new field of study that has the potential to positively influence human behaviour and strengthen civil society around the world. The fundamental premise of Restorative Practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.”<sup>3</sup> By working in partnership with CDI Tallaght, who are currently implementing this model in their area, the YCL Pilot Programme incorporated an opportunity for YCL participants, YCL mentors and representatives from community organisations to be trained together in Restorative Practices techniques. Three Restorative Practices trainings were offered as follows:

- Introduction to Restorative Practices in Neighbourhoods (one-day workshop)
- Restorative Practices – Facilitator Skills Training (two day Course)
- Circles Training (one day Workshop)

### **3.3.4 Mentoring**

To facilitate and support the young people to transfer their learning into community leadership roles the YCL Programme sought to recruit and select a group of 25-30 mentors who, following appropriate Garda vetting, would commit to supporting the programme participants through their course of study.

It was envisaged that the mentors, experienced leaders from organisations in the locality, would meet for six facilitated meetings. These meetings would be designed to inform the mentors about the YCL programme as a whole, to share insights into the specific programme components (such as STEPS and ASLFL) and to support them in their work with

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<sup>3</sup> International Institute for Restorative Practices, [www.iirp.edu](http://www.iirp.edu)

the young people. The 'Circle of Mentors' would also be invited to participate in the initial Restorative Practices (RP) training day and individuals from within the group could elect to progress to the second and third stages of RP training.

The mentors would act as local champions for the YCL Programme and each mentor would be allocated one or two participants to support. Mentors would ideally meet with their mentees during the STEPS and ASLFL modules and would support their mentees in their Community Action Projects, possibly providing a leadership placement within their own organisations where appropriate.

In providing one-to-one support, the mentors would be in a position to guide the participants on their leadership journey. In turn, by engaging with existing community leaders and working with them to understand their perspective, it was anticipated that the participants would develop a greater understanding of community leadership in action.

### **3.3.5 Community Action Projects**

Module 3 of the Foróige ASLFL Programme requires that participants complete a 20-hour Community Action Project placement with an organisation on a voluntary basis. This was seen as a vital opportunity for the participants to transfer their learning into the community. Participants are required to complete the Foróige Module 3 Project Record and Learning Journal which encourages them to plan their Community Action Project carefully and to reflect on their progress throughout and on conclusion of their project.

### **3.3.6 Young Community Innovators**

The final component of the YCL Programme was to be the establishment a youth innovation committee. This sub-group of YCL Pilot Programme participants would serve the community by acting as a resource or a "go-to" group for organisations in the area and would also become youth role models and spokespersons who would take responsibility for initiating community action.

## **3.4 Cadbury's Spots V Stripes – a Synergistic Opportunity for YCL**

Cadburys Spots V Stripes is a sponsored community programme of family-fun events. NSP, in association with their cross-border partner Groundwork Northern Ireland, coordinated the 2011/2012 Spots V Stripes events across 56 Dublin communities. Though not designed to be a component of the YCL Programme, in mid-2011, YCL Facilitator Jacqui Ward saw the potential of the Spots V Stripes Programme as an additional opportunity to enable the YCL participants to further develop their leadership skills.

## **3.5 YCL Pilot Programme Participant Selection**

The YCL Programme was advertised in local media (Northside People and Near FM) and on Activelink, and an initial invitation for applications (see Appendix 3) was sent to:

- Local second level schools
- Local PLC schools
- Youthreach Centres and Community Training Centres
- The Northside Partnership "Challenger Programme" current and former participants
- The Northside Partnership "Millennium Fund" current and former participants

- Alumni of existing Northside Partnership Leadership programmes
- All local organisations with access to young people
- Local Employment Service (LES) Offices

The Co-ordinator, Carol Conway also visited all schools and youth groups who sought additional information and she met with groups of students and young people to tell them about the programme. Despite this extensive publicising of the programme, there did not appear to be a direct correlation between the schools and clubs visited and the numbers of applications received from those locations.

The selection panel included the YCL Programme Manager, Noel Kelly, the Co-ordinator and representatives from local youth organisations, schools and other Northside Partnership youth initiatives. The panel met on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 to review the applications and invited all applicants to participate in a selection process which took place in the Contact Point Centre, Kilbarrack, on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

The selection process comprised both group activities and individual interviews and the task of the panel was to ensure that:

- there was a gender balance in each group;
- prospective participants demonstrated leadership capabilities, a positive attitude, motivation, commitment and enthusiasm and an ability to attend on all programme dates; and
- there was a geographical spread in each group.

While it was considered to be an advantage if participants had a track record of being involved in organisations in the community, either as volunteers or ordinary members, this was not an essential requirement. The programme was not over-subscribed and the number of applications received was less than had been anticipated. Given that all applicants had demonstrated their commitment by applying and attending for selection, the selection panel decided to award all applicants a place on the programme. It was noted at the time that word of mouth had generated a number of the applications and the Co-ordinator felt that graduate YCL participants could prove to be an effective force in attracting applicants in future years.

## 4. The Evaluation Methodology

The YCL Pilot Programme evaluation was formative, with evaluation taking place before, during and after the programme in order to facilitate continual improvement. In line with best practice in the evaluation of AP funded programmes YCL engaged the services of Professor Mark Morgan, Ph.D., Cregan Professor of Education and Psychology, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, to provide expert advice on all aspects of the YCL evaluation.

As the Pilot Programme progressed, some amendments to the initially proposed evaluation approach were implemented to ensure that the data gathered would add maximum value to the emerging programme. Research methods such as telephone and online surveys, focus groups sessions, one to one interviews, psychometric testing, implementation team review meetings and attendance at training evenings and participant events were used to gather relevant data. The evaluation focused on the areas shown in Fig. 2 below:



**Figure 2: YCL Evaluation - Areas of Focus**

The following is a summary of the approach taken to each strand of the evaluation process:

### **1. Northside Area Research**

- An Area Baseline Online Survey was distributed to 60 organisations in the community. Following a low response rate, the required data was eventually gathered through telephone interviews.

### **2. Pilot Programme Participants**

- The participants were divided into two groups – 16-18 years and 19-25 years – and in May 2011, opening night participant focus group sessions were followed by a one-to-one Participant Baseline Telephone Questionnaire and a Participant Baseline Online Survey.
- Participants completed an online communications survey called the Forte Communications Style Profile.
- Two additional participant focus group sessions were held in August 2011 and March 2012 to evaluate participants' progress and their level of satisfaction with the programme.
- Exit interviews were held with participants who left the programme prior to completion.
- On conclusion of the programme, a one-to-one Participant Final Interview was held with all who completed the programme.

### **3. Pilot Programme Management and Implementation**

- Pre-programme meetings were held with the Programme Manager and Co-ordinator to preview the approach to the programme.
- Mid and post programme meetings were held with the Programme Manager, Co-ordinator and the programme implementation team to review progress and capture key learning from the programme.
- The evaluator facilitated an initial team building session with the programme implementation team and attended a selection of Steering Group Meetings.
- There was regular email, telephone and face-to-face consultation between the evaluator, the co-ordinator and the programme implementation team.

#### 4. Pilot Programme Design and Components

- Data regarding the participants' general satisfaction levels with the standard of programme management and with the components of the programme were gathered by the evaluator through the baseline and mid-programme focus groups and the Participant Final Interview.
- Initial and mid-programme focus groups were conducted with the "Circle of Mentors" to determine their pre-mentoring experience and attitudes, their YCL mentoring experiences and their conclusions and recommendations regarding the mentoring element of the YCL Pilot Programme.
- The mentors completed a Mentor Baseline Online Survey and a Forte Communications Style Profile at the start of the programme.

#### 5. The YCL Comparison Group

- Following liaison with representatives of relevant schools, agencies and community and youth groups, a comparison group of 16 young people was selected.
- A Comparison Group Baseline Telephone Questionnaire and a Comparison Group Baseline Online Survey were completed at the start of the programme and these questions were repeated in telephone interviews in September 2012.

## 5. The Evaluation Findings

### 5.1 Northside Area Research – Findings:

The objective of the area research was to determine the baseline levels of youth civic engagement through participation in volunteering and community leadership in the Northside area. This would then be compared with a repeat measurement at the end of the programme to determine the increase in civic engagement as a result of the programme. In October 2011 the *Northside Area Baseline Online Survey* (Appendix 4) was emailed to 60 organisations in the area – only eight responded. The survey was subsequently completed by telephone with 31 of the remaining organisations (see Appendix 5 for a full listing).

- Of the 39 organisations who did participate in the baseline area research, 72% were in the community not-for-profit sector and 26% were in the youth, sport and education sectors.
- Fifty-one per cent of the organisations were located in the priority areas and 49% were in the wider Northside Partnership catchment area.
- Ninety per cent of the organisations surveyed used the services of volunteers and 50% of organisations had ten or less volunteers.
- It is significant that the majority of organisations surveyed (89%) tended to recruit volunteers in the over 26 years age bracket and those who recruited younger volunteers in the 16-25 years age group (11%) were mainly organisations in the youth sector.

- While 46% of organisations reported that they could take up to ten volunteers, the most typical role for volunteers in the 39 organisations surveyed was “a member or officer of the Board of Management” (75% of organisations).
- The surveyed organisations’ most frequently cited desirable volunteer characteristics were: competency and experience in required skills; commitment and reliability; a high interest in and knowledge of the work of the organisation; communication skills; and honesty and integrity.

Following analysis of the area baseline research it became evident that, given the current profile of volunteers in these organisations, one year would not be a realistic enough period in which to achieve a significant incremental increase in youth involvement across the spectrum of these organisations. Therefore, a repeat survey in one year would not be appropriate. Instead, for the Pilot Programme, those organisations providing Community Action Project placements would be invited to provide feedback on the performance of YCL Pilot Programme participants during their placements.

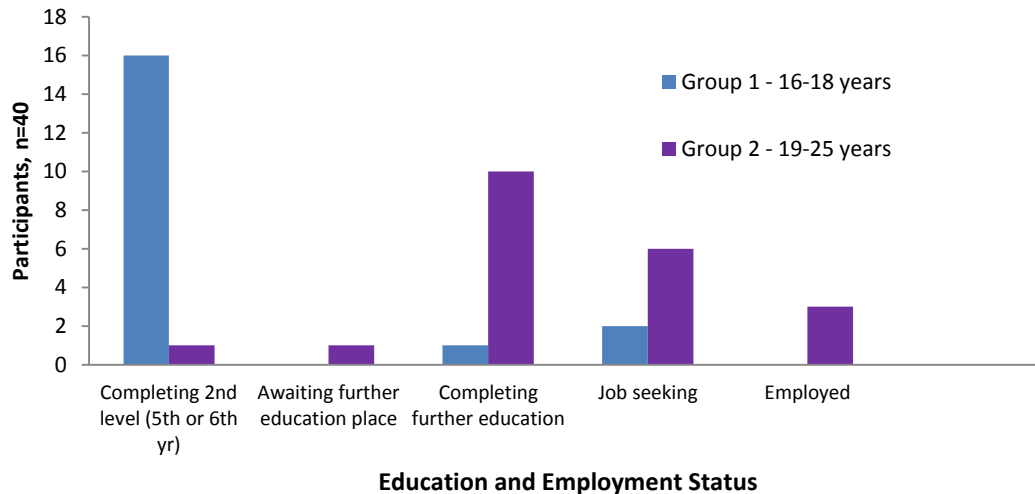
## **5.2 Pilot Programme Participants – Findings:**

The YCL Pilot Programme recruitment approach was thorough, with applicants taking part in interviews and an assessment centre-based exercise. Despite extensive publicising of the programme within the community, the initial response to the recruitment campaign for pilot programme participants was lower than expected. As a consequence, the programme team made a conscious decision to award places to marginal applicants. Two groups of young people (16-18 years and 19-25 years) formed the 2011/2012 YCL Pilot Programme group. The groups attended their introductory evenings at the end of May 2011 where they gained an overview of the programme, signed the YCL Participant Contract (Appendix 6) and participated in an initial focus group discussion.

### **5.2.1 Participant Background Information**

The gender divide of the 40 participants was 37% male and 63% female. The YCL Programme Application Forms showed that the majority of the participants selected in the 16-18 years age group were either in the 5<sup>th</sup> or final year of their secondary education.

As would be expected, the education and employment status of the 19-25 years age group was more varied (see Fig. 3)



**Figure 3: Participants’ Education and Employment Status, May 2011**

In the YCL Participant Baseline Telephone Questionnaire (Appendix 7 Q.3), participants were asked how they first became involved in organisations in their community. Ten (25%) of the participants became involved because their friends were involved while six (15%) became involved because the selected organisation was near their home.

People volunteer for a range of different reasons. Volunteering Ireland has reported that nationally, in 2011, 14% of volunteers signed up ‘give something back’ while 11% volunteered to improve their skills<sup>4</sup>. In the YCL Participant Baseline Telephone Interview (Q4), participants were asked for their reasons for joining organisations in their community. Thirty-five per cent of YCL participants reported that they volunteered to develop the community (this category included “to give something back to society”) while 25% reported that they volunteered for personal development reasons (this category included “to develop new skills”).

Question 6 of the Participant Baseline Telephone Questionnaire explored the extent to which participants sought leadership responsibilities on joining an organisation. Eight per cent of the 39 respondents said they preferred to “participate as ordinary members”; 54% preferred to “wait and take on leadership responsibilities if you are asked to”; and 38% reported that they preferred to “actively seek leadership responsibilities”.

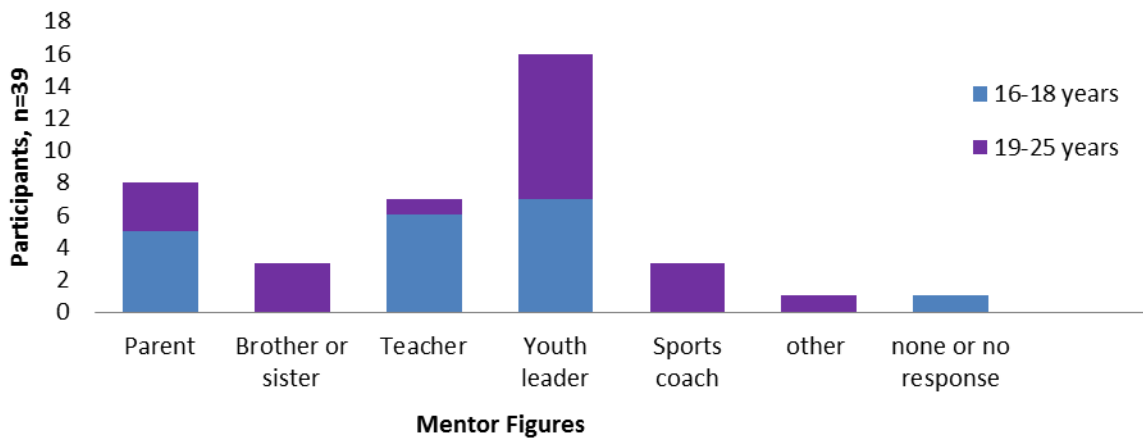
We were interested to see if, at the end of the programme the YCL participants would express a greater preference for “actively seeking leadership responsibilities”.

In Question 8 of the Participant Baseline Telephone Questionnaire the concept of mentoring was introduced to each participant. They were asked if they had ever had a mentor figure in their lives in a formal or informal way and, if so, who that person was. Underlining the importance that youth leaders can play in the lives of young people in the Northside area, sixteen (40%) of participants cited youth leaders in a range of local organisations as their primary mentor figures.

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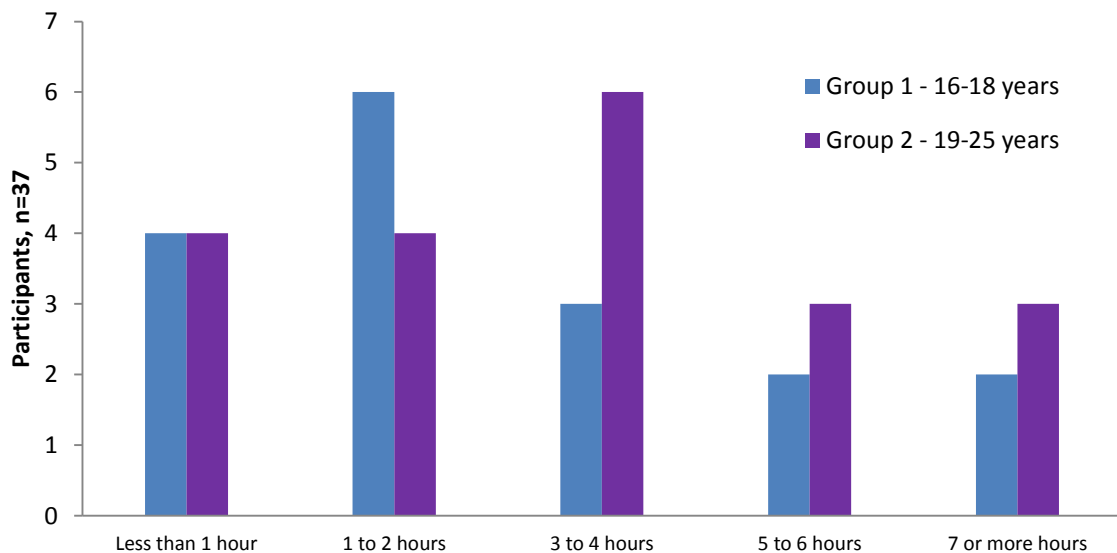
<sup>4</sup> [www.volunteering.ie](http://www.volunteering.ie)





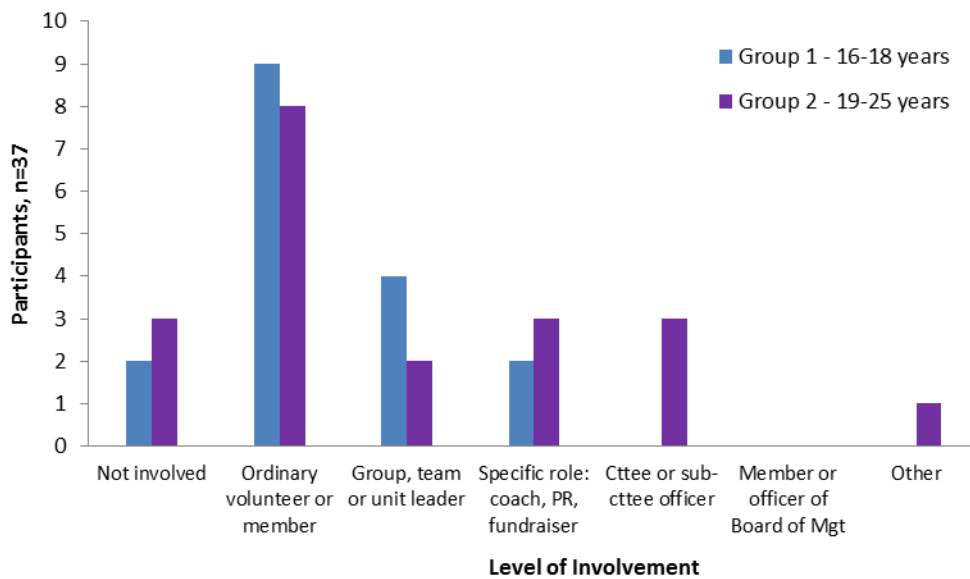
**Figure 4: Participants' Mentor Figures, May 2011**

In addition to the telephone questionnaire participants were also asked to complete a Participant Baseline Online Questionnaire. Three of the 40 participants (who were involved in local organisations) left the programme in the opening weeks and had not completed the questionnaire at the time of leaving. In Question 4 of the Participant Baseline Online Survey (Appendix 8), participants were asked to quantify the average weekly hours that they devote to organisations/clubs/groups in their community. The responses ranged from less than one hour to more than seven hours (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5: Participants' Baseline Hours of Community Involvement, May 2011**

Responses to Question 5 of the Participant Baseline Online Survey showed that the participants were involved at varying levels in organisations or clubs in their community as categorised in Fig. 6:



**Figure 6: Participants' Baseline Level of Community Involvement, May 2011**

Question 9 of the Participant Baseline Online Survey invited participants to rate themselves [on a four point Likert Scale ranging from Rarely = 1, to Consistently = 4] on a set of leadership characteristics such as confidence, openness to change and being a role model for others. Each participant's responses were then totalled to give an overall leadership self-rating score which would be compared with their final leadership self-rating at the end of the programme (see page 45).

### **5.2.2 Participant Communications Profile**

On joining the programme all participants were asked to complete a Forté Institute Communications Style Profile. The Forté Profile is a robust, well-validated communication style report, used globally for over 30-years for personal development at all levels in the corporate and community and voluntary sectors. The test is taken online and the results provide information about respondents' preferred communication style and the impact that they may be having on others. An understanding of Forté can increase an individual's self-awareness and can help to strengthen team performance. In the case of the YCL participants, it enabled them to understand the impact of their communication styles on each other, and equally, to appreciate others' styles.

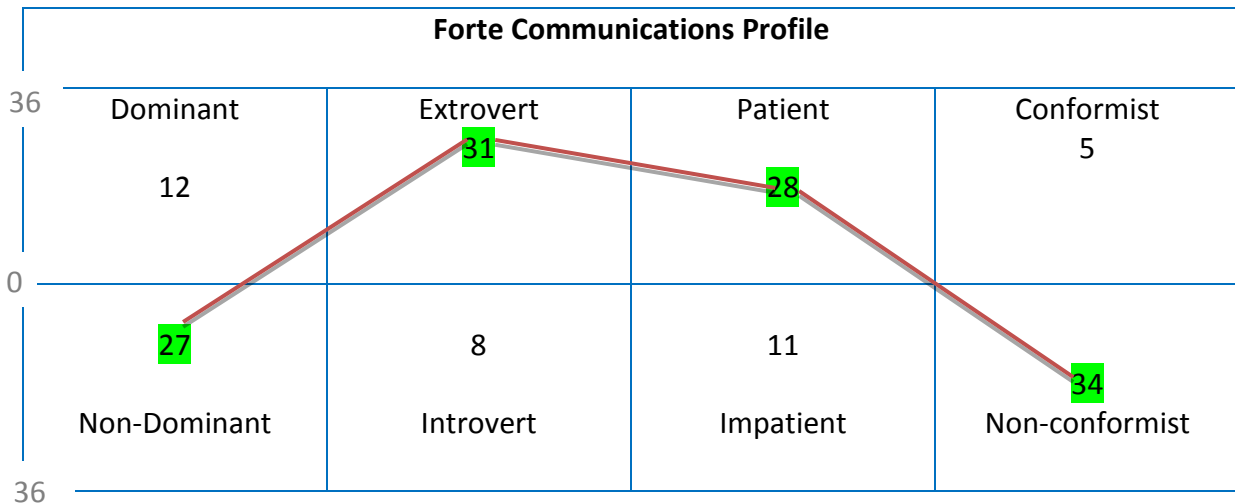
The Forté Profile measures a person's communication preferences on a scale of 0-36 on four dichotomies as follows: Dominant to Non-dominant; Extrovert to Introvert; Patient to Impatient; and Conformist to Non-conformist.

Thirty-nine of the original 40 Pilot Programme participants completed their Forté Profiles and it is significant that of these, 31 (80%) had an extroverted style while 34 (87%) were non-conformist in their approach. In the 16-18 years age group 95% had an extroverted style and 95% were non-conformist in their approach. Extroverts are energised by engaging with people and they have a distinct preference for verbal communication and for articulating their thoughts. Extroverts enjoy group discussion and frequently compete for air-time whereas Introverts tend to contribute better where discussion takes place in

smaller groups or on a one-to-one basis. In her book, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking*<sup>5</sup>, the author Susan Cain notes that ...“we see talkers as leaders. The more a person talks the more other group members direct their attention to him, which means that he becomes more powerful as the meeting goes on... all of this would be fine if more talking were correlated with greater insight, but research suggests that there is no such link.”

Non-conformists tend to be unconventional with a preference for change and variety and less interest in following regulations and procedures. A group profile such as this presents particular challenges for facilitators and the YCL facilitators noted that the energy levels in the formative stages of the groups were particularly high and it took a number of weeks for the groups to settle into the programme. The combined “primary” or preferred communications style of all 39 participants is illustrated in the following Forte Composite Profile is shown in the following table.

**Table 1: Participants’ Composite Forte Communications Profile, May 2011**



**5.2.3 Participant Retention – Findings:**

The YCL Pilot Programme lost impetus when continuity was interrupted by the July-August 2011 Summer break. Significant facilitator time was consumed in ‘chasing’ non-attenders on resumption in September 2011.

The overall attendance rate for those who completed the programme was 76%. Sixteen participants did not complete the programme. Of these, 50% did not return to the programme after the summer break.

<sup>5</sup> Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking, Susan Cain, 2012, Penguin

Fig.7 below shows the stages at which participants left the programme

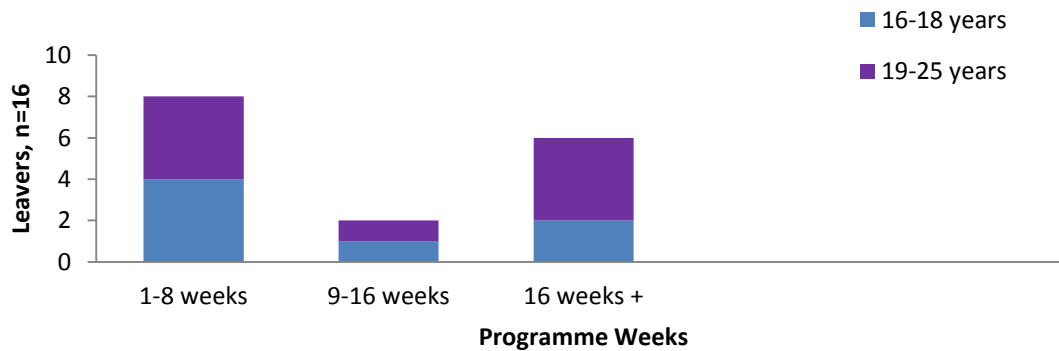


Figure 7: Stages at which Participants Left the Programme

Telephone exit interviews were held with those participants who did not complete the YCL Pilot Programme and who were still willing to engage with the evaluation. The reasons they gave for leaving are summarised in the following table.

Table 2: Participants’ Reasons for Leaving the Programme

Reasons for Leaving (n=16)	Group 1: 16-18 years	Group 2: 19-25 years
Secured a place on another course which took priority	3	1
Study commitments	1	1
Work commitments		1
Emigrated	1	
Domestic commitments		3
Did not enjoy the YCL programme		2
Unexplained	2	1
<b>Total who did not complete the pilot programme</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>

It is interesting to note that six participants left the YCL Pilot Programme for reasons connected with commitments to other courses of study. Given the age profile of the participants and the life choices that they were making at the time, this would not be entirely unexpected. “Domestic commitments” included caring for family members and, in the case of one participant, handling a family conflict. Of the two participants who “Did not enjoy the programme” one participant’s views were that “the content was boring and the games were childish”, while another “found it too difficult to speak out in public.” In the case of at least two participants who left the programme early, it is the view of the evaluator that literacy difficulties may have contributed to their decision to leave.

The YCL non-completion rate of 40% was higher than the anticipated non-completion rate of 20%. In a 2010 Higher Education Authority (HEA) Report<sup>6</sup> the average rate of non-progression of undergraduates in 2007/2008 across all sectors and NFQ Levels was reported to be 15%. The rates of non-progression vary strongly according to the NFQ level, ranging from 25%/26% at levels 6/7, to between 4% and 16% at level 8. The report also notes that there is a clear and strong link between prior educational attainment and successful progression. All seven of the participants in the 16-18 year age group who left the YCL Programme were still in their 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year of secondary education.

Of the 24 YCL graduates, 90% managed to sustain their baseline involvement in community organisations during 2011/2012. This was a considerable achievement given that many faced the additional challenges of completing state examinations, transiting from second to third level education and coping with other significant life-changing circumstances during the YCL Programme period. This sustained involvement is particularly impressive in light of the fact that the programme required participants to attend up to 45 (weekly) two-hour evening training sessions and to take part in additional RP training and Community Action Projects. One participant in the 16-18 years age group demonstrated strong commitment to the programme when, in addition to having a baby during the programme year, she successfully completed her Leaving Certificate, her YCL course work and her Community Action Project.

One of the participants who left the pilot programme at the half-way point due to work circumstances has returned to complete it with the 2012/2013 group. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many of those who left the programme have continued to volunteer and in their exit interviews some ex-participants remarked that they had benefitted from the parts of YCL that they did attend.

While the Pilot Programme non-completion rate was disappointing it provided valuable learning which informed changes to the recruitment approach for the 2012/2013 YCL programme. This includes the use of a structured, competency-based interview questionnaire (Appendix 10), the involvement of YCL Pilot Programme graduates in the recruitment process and the introduction of a September start date.

## 5.3 Pilot Programme Management and Implementation – Findings:

### 5.3.1 The Steering Group

- The YCL Pilot Programme Steering Group met seven times between March 2011 and September 2012.
- The diversity of the membership of the Steering Group ensured that a wide range of community experience was represented and the group members worked together very effectively in support of the programme aims and objectives.

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<sup>6</sup> “A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education”, Higher Education Authority (HEA) Report, Mr. Oliver Mooney, Dr. Vivienne Patterson, Mr. Muiris O’ Connor and Dr. Abigail Chantler, 2010

- The Steering Group members received appropriate advance notification of the Steering Group meetings and meeting documentation was prepared to a professional standard and distributed in a timely way.
- As the programme progressed, work commitments made it difficult for some Steering Group members to attend all meetings.
- YCL participants played an active role on the Steering Group and two participants from each of the age groups attended the meetings on a rotational basis, giving a wide range of participants an opportunity to have their views heard and acted upon. Meetings were initially held mid-afternoon but were switched to a 4.30 pm timing to enable participants to attend after school/college hours.

### 5.3.2 Implementation and Facilitation

Separate training for both age groups took place on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm in the Northside Partnership’s Contact Point location in Kilbarrack, Dublin 5. To foster cohesion between the groups and to ensure maximum attendance, participants had the facility to alternate between groups on training nights.

In the Participant Final Interviews (Appendix 11, Part C, Q.1) the participants were asked to rate (on a scale of 1-10) a range of aspects of YCL programme implementation and as can be seen from Fig. 8, their ratings were consistently favourable.

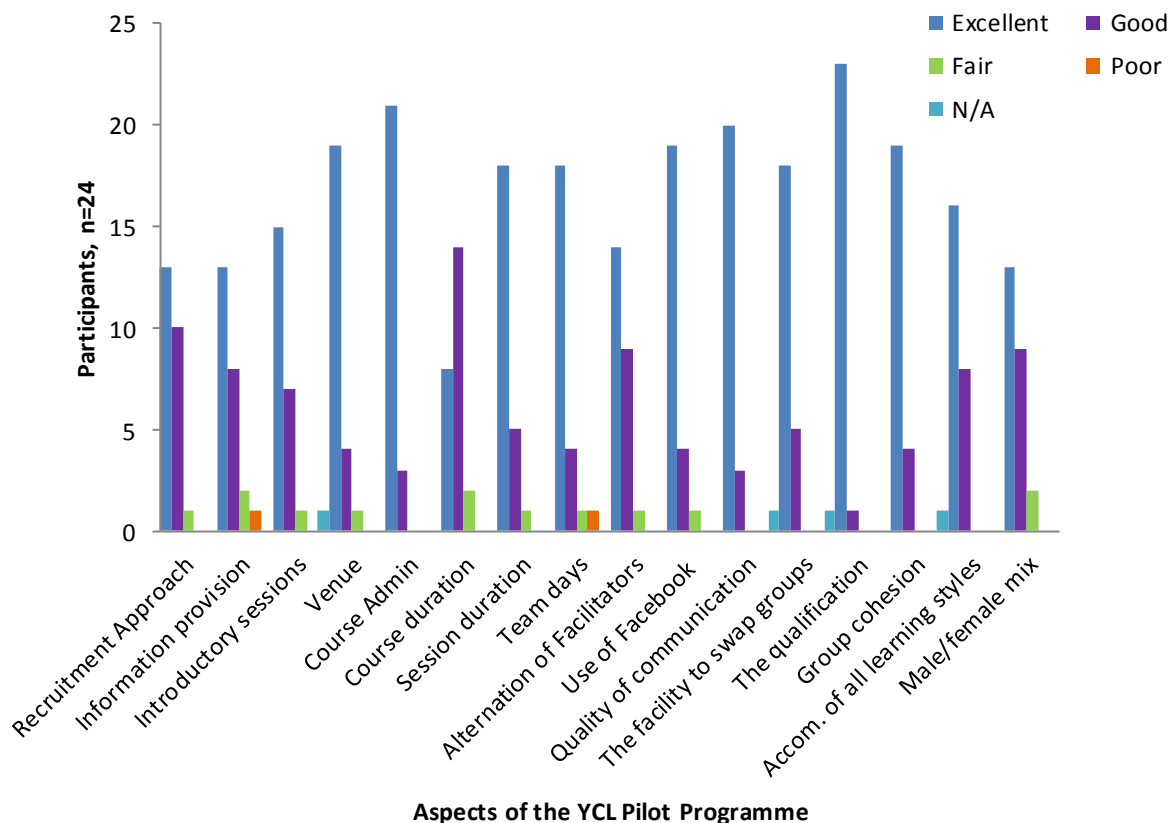


Figure 8: Participants’ Final Rating of 16 Aspects of the YCL Pilot Programme

In the Participant Final Interviews (Appendix 11, Part C, Q.2) participants were asked to rate the standard of the programme facilitation across ten facilitator qualities on a scale of 1-10, with 10 high (Fig.9).

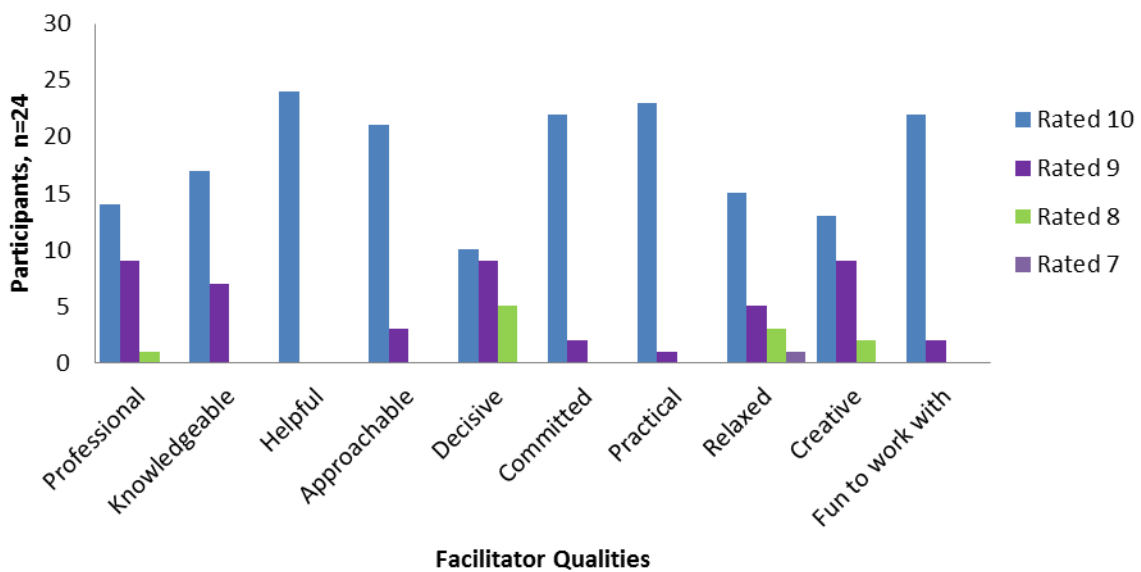


Figure 9: Participants' Rating of YCL Facilitation

### 5.3.3 Communications

- Participants were very satisfied with the standard of communication and the level of information that they received although some said that they would have preferred to have received a more-detailed programme overview at the beginning of YCL.
- Facebook groups, email and texting were the preferred methods of communicating with participants and these media were used very effectively. It was noted that participants frequently did not respond to text messages and mobile phone calls from the implementation team.
- Participants felt warmly welcomed from the beginning and felt that the programme administration was very professional.
- Participants valued the facility to alternate between groups and welcomed the fact that the facilitators alternated.
- Most participants reported that they would have preferred the Programme to have continued for longer and would have liked to participate in additional team days.
- The programme implementation team participated in an initial team-building session and regular evaluation review meetings and curriculum meetings. The team worked in close cooperation with the Steering Group to ensure the achievement of programme milestones and outcomes. Participants felt that they gelled well with the other members of their groups and that the YCL Pilot Programme group as a whole was cohesive and that all learning styles were accommodated.

- From creation to conclusion the administration and delivery of the YCL Pilot Programme was managed in a professional way by the programme management and implementation team.

## 5.4 Pilot Programme Design and Components – Findings:

### 5.4.1 Programme Curriculum (STEPS and Foróige ASLFL)

- The Pacific Institute STEPS Programme and the Foróige ASLFL Programme were the cornerstones of the YCL Pilot Programme. With both STEPS and ASLFL there was a considerable volume of material to be covered during each term. Both programmes were well received by the participants.
- Two STEPS sessions were completed each week and although this pace was initially slow, the participants’ learning and retention was high. The participants quickly understood the principles of STEPS and referenced these principles throughout the year.
- The facilitators felt that STEPS and ASLFL were naturally complementary and the sequencing of ASLFL after STEPS worked particularly well.

The following Figure shows the Participants’ ratings of a range of aspects of the STEPS Programme (Appendix 11, Participant Final Interview, Part C, Q.3a).

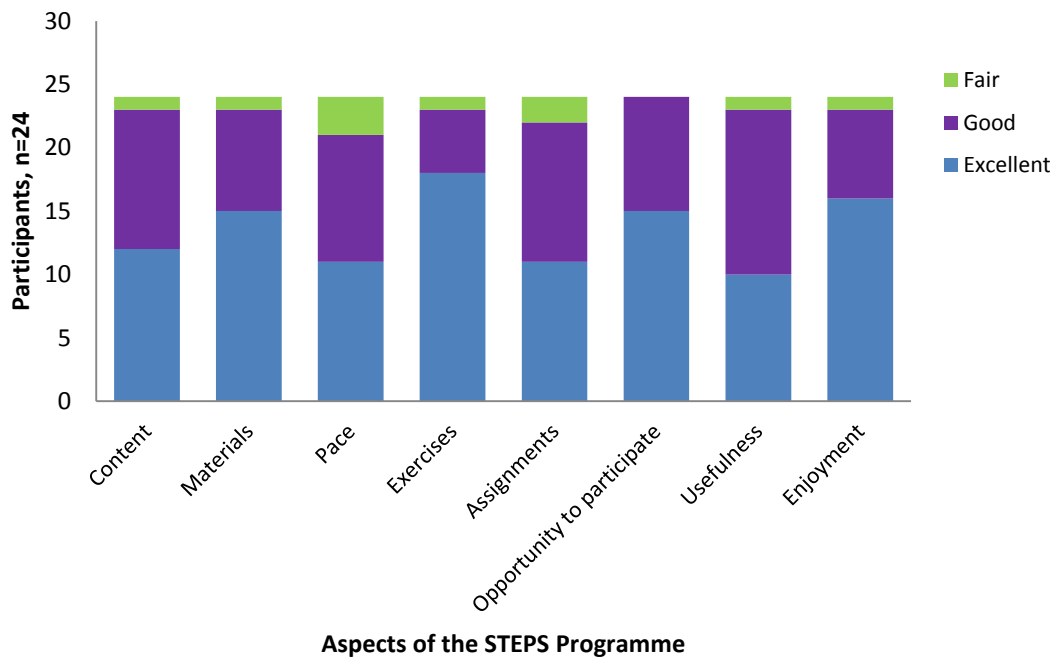


Figure 10: Participants’ Final Rating of the STEPS Programme

- Due to the design and lesson plans of the Foróige ASLFL Programme the facilitators felt that the ASLFL sessions were particularly user-friendly.
- The true learning from the ASLFL Programme comes from giving participants time to reflect. It is essential that participants complete their reflections as they work



through the programme – otherwise the accumulated task is too onerous. Those participants who allowed their reflection exercises to accumulate ran into difficulties at the end of the programme and needed to be supported by the facilitators on additional weekend sessions to ensure that they could complete the work and receive accreditation.

- Foróige requires significant paperwork to be compiled and returned for evaluation for each participant at the end of the programme and the deadline dates for this were not clearly flagged in advance. This placed an additional workload on the YCL facilitators.

The following Figure shows the Participant’s rating of a range of aspects of the Foróige ASLFL Programme (Appendix 11, Final Participant Interview, Part C, Q.4a).

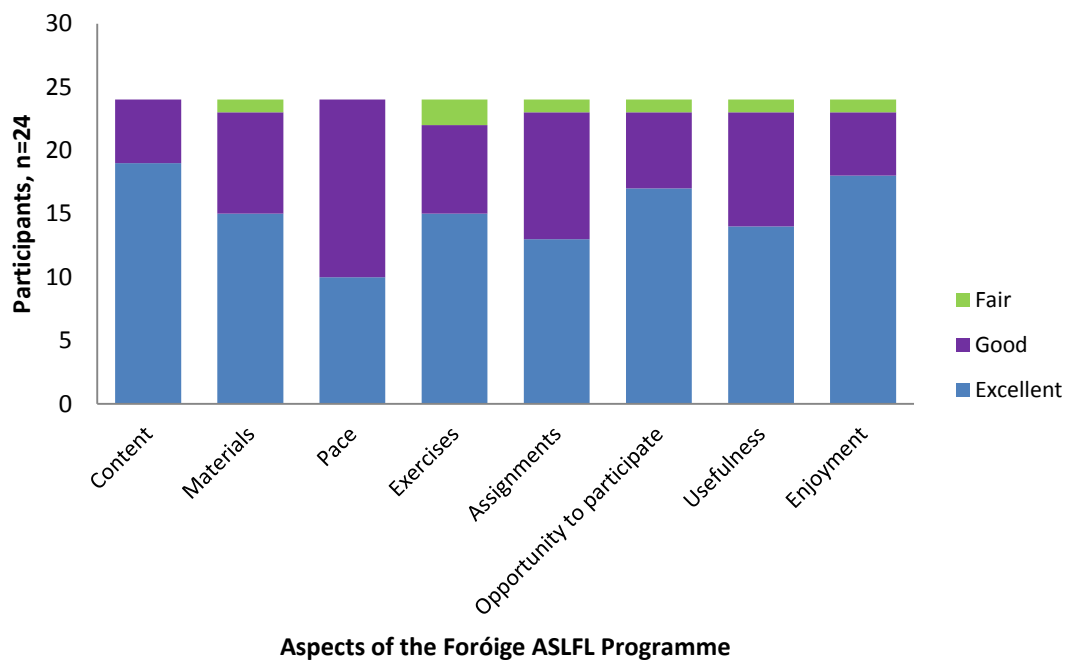


Figure 11: Participants’ Final Rating of Aspects of the Foróige ASLFL Programme

The following comments were provided during focus group sessions held in August 2011 with both age groups.

#### 5.4.1.1 The Pacific Institute STEPS Programme – Positives

- “It was more hands-off as opposed to writing, which was better for me.”
- “It helps you to clarify where you want to go.”
- “During steps we started to bond as a team.”
- “It’s interesting.”
- “It’s easy to understand.”
- “The activities made it easier to connect to the material.”
- “It’s stuff we knew – STEPS makes it easier to articulate it.”
- “The environment was relaxed.”
- “Learning to control self-talk and how to help you to get yourself to fall asleep at night – that was good.”

#### **5.4.1.2 The Pacific Institute STEPS Programme – Benefits**

- “It makes a difference when you say you want to do something rather than you have to do it.”
- “It shows you how to find faults and fix them.”
- “I feel I am more positive.”
- “I have more self-belief.”
- “My confidence has improved.”
- “I am more aware of my blind spots.”
- “I think about things more and rethink them.”
- “I look for the consequences of my actions.”
- “We know that we have the power to change.”
- “We feel better about the things we took for granted.”
- “We can broaden our horizons to make things better for ourselves.”
- “I find it easier to stick to things – for example, taking regular exercise.”
- “I am working more with volunteer work and I am sticking to it.”
- “I am more accepting of compliments.”
- “I am telling others about the activities and exercises.”
- “I know more ways to talk to others and make them feel better.”
- “It has changed the way we look at things.”
- “I feel calmer at home.”
- “I’m eating more healthily.”
- “I am more active in playing sports.”
- “The goal setting is working.”
- “Once you are calmer there is a knock on effect on others.”

#### **5.4.1.3 The Pacific Institute STEPS Programme – Negatives**

- “The Louis Tice Videos.” [Some participants found the videos dated and repetitive.]
- “I didn’t like the reflections and I would like less of these.”
- “I found it a bit long at times – I would have liked more exercises.”
- “The fact that some participants did not show up and did not give a reason.”
- “The comfort zone exercise.”

#### **5.4.1.4 The Foróige ASLFL Programme – Positives**

- “It was good.”
- “Good craic and fun.”
- “Interesting.”
- “Practical – for everyday life.”
- “Helpful – it shows you the ways to use skills.”
- “The exercises clarify the theory.”
- “We are learning new skills to adapt to other situations.”
- “We are recognising our own leadership style.”
- “It clarifies where you want to go.”

#### **5.4.1.5 The Foróige ASLFL Programme – Benefits**

- “We learned a lot about life.”
- “We learned how to be a good team worker and a good leader and how to set SMART goals.”
- “We have more confidence.”
- “I listen more.”
- “I am more tolerant in teams.”

#### **5.4.1.6 The Foróige ASLFL Programme – Negatives**

- “The self-evaluation content is juvenile.”
- “The reflections are repetitive – the same content only worded differently.”

#### **5.4.1.7 Leadership Insights**

Two visiting speakers: Killian Stokes, Fundraiser and Social Entrepreneur, and Harriette Lynch, owner of Healthpro, delivered “Leadership Insight” sessions to each YCL group. During these interactive sessions YCL participants had an opportunity to learn about the leadership journeys of both of these young entrepreneurs and to ask questions.

### **5.4.2 Restorative Practices (RP)**

In partnership with CDI Tallaght, the YCL Pilot Programme participants – together with the facilitators and representatives from the Steering Group, the Circle of Mentors and organisations in the community – completed three Restorative Practice trainings delivered by John Bolton of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). The trainings were: a one-day course “Restorative Practices in Neighbourhoods” held on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 and again on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2012; a two-day “Facilitator Skills” course held on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 and a further one-day training course in the use of “RP Circles” held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2012.

As three of the four RP training days fell on school days, not all YCL participants were free to attend. (In the 2012/2013 YCL Programme, Restorative Practices training will be an integral part of the programme and will not be optional. Training will take place on Saturdays to ensure that all participants will be able to attend.)

Following the RP training, RP practices have been filtering into Northside community settings in an emergent way. Many participants cited examples of how they have used and are continuing to use RP successfully in YCL situations and in home, school and youth settings to resolve conflict issues. This emergent approach has enabled the Young Community Leaders participants (YCL’s) to become more confident in using RP techniques. The facilitators frequently used the RP Circles method to help the groups to get to know each other, to ensure that all voices were heard and to enable the group to resolve intra-group conflicts. This approach was particularly beneficial given the extroverted nature of the group.

#### **5.4.2.1 Restorative Practices – what the participants said**

In the June 2012 Participant Final interviews, 92% of the participants strongly agreed that the RP trainings have helped them to be more aware of how conflicts occur. Seventy-nine per cent strongly agreed that RP helped them to understand why others behave as they do, and 79% agreed that RP has helped them to resolve conflicts in a better way.

Qualitative comments included:



- “I have used it in my youth club and it has worked very well.”
- “I have not used it yet but my teacher asked me if I would like to introduce it into the school.”
- “I used it in the basketball club.”
- I use RP at school in dealing with first years and with people in my year. I get both sides of the story – I did all four training days and enjoyed it.”
- “My mam [has learned it from me and] has used it with a three-year old.”
- “I feel it helped a lot. There are seven in my family and 10 grandchildren. Usually I would be screaming but now I can sit down in a circle with them – I just think back to the circles training day.”
- “I have used it multiple times. I had an issue with two boys who were abusive to each other. I went through the card and it was resolved straight away. It was so simple – it worked.”
- “I just didn’t like the way it was delivered – I felt the questions were useful though.”
- “I really enjoyed it – I have used it as a door man twice.”
- “At home there was an argument with me and a family member and by sitting down and talking about it we worked it out and got over our problems.”
- “I loved it and use it every day – it has become a part of my life. I am trying to introduce it into my workplace – I even use it with my little sisters. I feel everyone needs to learn it.”
- “I tried it with a family member and it didn’t work.”
- “I have not used it yet.”
- “I feel the method works. I felt that the RP training was long and you could lose interest.”

For Restorative Practices to flourish there needs to be a “whole-community” approach across all of the targeted organisations. However, to accomplish this, schools and youth organisations need to be fully convinced of the benefits of RP. The introduction of RP into a locality is a long term change management project.

In recent months, following a number of teen suicides in Ireland, there has been considerable coverage in the national media of Restorative Practices as a tool for combatting school bullying. On RTE’s Pat Kenny Show on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Professor Mona O’Moore, founder of the Anti-Bullying Centre in Trinity College Dublin spoke about the value of implementing restorative consequences as opposed to punitive consequences in response to bullying, and she emphasised the need for a national strategy and campaign, and the necessity to adopt a whole-school community approach to saying no to bullying<sup>7</sup>.

Following the YCL Pilot Programme there is now a core of graduate YCL’s and adult community leaders who are willing to introduce RP into their work. As more YCL’s and

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<sup>7</sup> Source [www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer](http://www.rte.ie/radio/radioplayer)

adult leaders complete the RP training and begin to use it in their work, there is an opportunity for RP to become more embedded in the community. Ideally the YCL programme should have taken action earlier (and closer in time to the RP trainings) to lead community change in introducing the RP model and to enable those who completed the trainings to practise their newly acquired RP tools and techniques in a planned way.

The target date for YCL to introduce Restorative Practices into two youth settings in the Northside area is 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2012. Two locations in the area (one youth organisation and one primary school) have been identified by YCL as organisations who will adopt RP. One organisation has an RP trained YCL graduate as an employee while the other has an RP trained graduate as a volunteer member. The already-established Young Community Innovators group will also play a role in facilitating the introduction of RP in the area. However, a community change initiative of this nature is likely to demand a more strategic and concentrated approach than the YCI group may be currently equipped to drive.

### **5.4.3 Mentoring**

Following a selection process, in August 2011 a group of 20 mentors formed the YCL “Circle of Mentors”. The mentors included experienced community leaders from the fields of education, law enforcement, youth and community leadership and local business. Their role was to support the participants in their progression through the YCL Pilot Programme curriculum and to help them to transfer their learning into leadership roles in the community.

A YCL Mentor Baseline Online Survey (Appendix 12) was conducted with the “Circle of Mentors” to determine their pre-mentoring experience and attitudes. Mentors also completed a Forte Communications Profile. This provided them with an understanding of their own communication preferences and it also facilitated the mentor/mentee matching process. When the matches were made, the mentors and mentees received a “Forte Interaction Profile” which explained how they could get the best from their communications with each other.

Of the 16 mentors who completed the baseline online survey the results indicated that ten had previously mentored young people under 25 years, either on a formal or informal basis through their jobs or in their work as community volunteers. The remaining six had no formal or informal mentoring experience. The mentors were asked to identify three things that they would like to gain from their participation as mentors and their responses can be categorised under the following headings:

- To gain a deeper understanding of the YCL Programme and what it can do for the area;
- To facilitate the development of the mentees;
- To gain experience of being involved in a formal mentoring programme; and
- To further develop mentoring skills.

The mentors had an excellent mix of skills and backgrounds and considerable career and life experience which could be accessed by the YCL participants. In August 2011 the mentors participated in a half-day mentor information session which outlined the role of the mentor and the boundaries of the mentoring programme. The facilitators prepared

the mentees for their first meeting and both mentors and mentees received a mentoring pack – a set of short forms which provided structure for their meetings (Appendix 13). The mentors were enthusiastic about supporting the participants and making a meaningful contribution to the programme.

The following is a summary of the feedback provided by the mentors at a mentoring review sessions in November 2011 and March 2012.

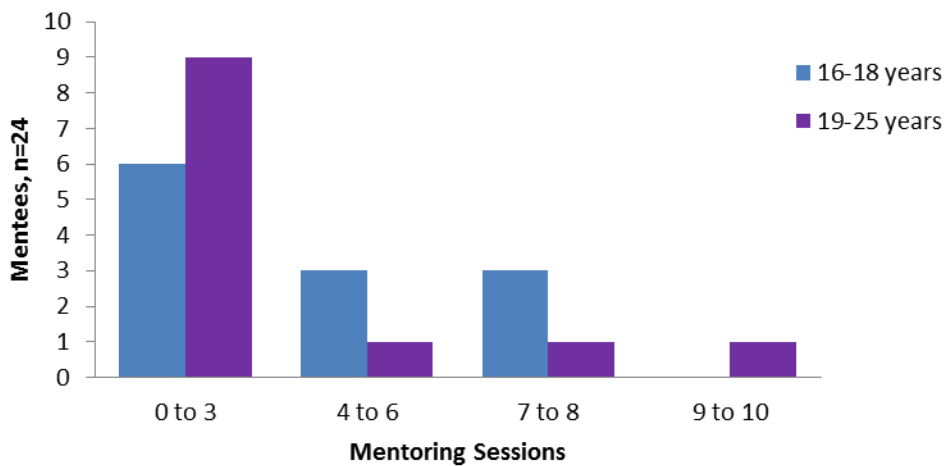
#### **5.4.3.1 Mentors' Viewpoint – What worked well**

- The pairing of mentors and mentees was seen to be appropriate in most cases
- Many mentors felt that they had established good rapport with their mentees
- Some mentors felt that the mentoring relationships were working well and that the mentees were benefitting from their support and practical guidance
- In most cases the mentors found that the Forté Communication Profiles and the Mentoring Pack were helpful aids to initial conversation with their mentees
- Some mentors attended the Restorative Practices training and found it a useful way to get to know the YCL group

#### **5.4.3.2 Mentors' Viewpoint – What was Challenging**

- There was a lack of clarity from the YCL Programme as to the purpose, aims and objectives of the mentoring relationship
- The mentors did not receive sufficient information regarding the course content [though additional information was subsequently provided]
- Appointments were not always set and kept by the mentees and many of the mentors felt that they, rather than the mentees were putting in most of the work
- Some mentees did not engage or opted out of mentoring at an early stage and appeared to have negative pre-conceptions about it
- There was a lack of preparation on the part of the mentees
- The second meetings with the mentees tended to be less constructive than the first
- Some participants did not appear to want or need mentoring or found it difficult to identify what they needed
- It felt as if the mentoring situation was contrived
- The meeting locations (usually local coffee shops) were inappropriate
- It would have been helpful if aims, objectives and ground rules had been established on a group basis at the beginning of the programme.

Mentees were expected to meet with their mentors every 4-6 weeks between September 2011 and April 2012. No formal record of mentoring sessions was held centrally by the programme. Of the 24 participants who completed the Pilot Programme, 15 reported meeting with their mentors on three or less occasions (two mentees had no meeting). The 16-18 years group reported achieving a higher level of engagement – approximately 45 mentoring sessions – as opposed to approximately 36 for the 19-25 years group (Fig. 12)



**Figure 12: Number of Mentoring Sessions Attended**

The following is a summary of the feedback provided by the mentees in their final interviews in June 2012.

#### **5.4.3.3 Mentees' Viewpoint – What Worked Well**

Many mentees commented favourably on their mentor's approachability. There were also positive comments regarding the benefits derived from the mentoring relationship:

- "My mentor was very useful to me and was very proactive in helping me with my CV – it was a good match."
- "It was great to have a mentor who would do anything or help with anything."
- "My mentor was someone to talk to if you had a problem. I really liked the fact that I had a mentor."
- "My mentor had more experience of life"
- "My mentor still keeps in contact."

#### **5.4.3.4 Mentees' Viewpoint – What was Challenging**

Ten mentees commented that their mentors did not know enough about the programme and in some cases there was confusion between the mentor and mentee as to what their respective roles were. Eight mentees felt that the meetings were limited in number because either the mentor or mentee was too busy or the mentee did not see the point in meeting. In three cases the relationship was terminated by mentees who felt that their opinions clashed with those of the mentor:

- "My mentor did not know much about the course."
- "Neither of us knew what we were supposed to do."
- "My mentor was too opposite to me. He sent me an agenda and I fired him."
- "At first it was fine and then we had a difference of opinion and we didn't meet anymore – my mentor was 'old school'."

- “My mentor corrected my grammar and I didn’t want to meet anymore,”

#### 5.4.3.5 Mentees’ Suggestions for Future Programmes

- YCL graduates could act as mentors for future programmes as they understand the programme requirements
- Mentoring sessions should take place in the Contact Point Centre
- Mentors should meet the mentees in a group situation at the start of the programme
- Mentors should have a list of questions that they can use
- Some course nights could be replaced by mentoring nights

An analysis of the participants’ ratings of the aspects of the mentoring component of YCL (Appendix 11, Part C, Q.5) shows that overall, the 16-18 years age group were more satisfied with the mentoring programme than the 19-25 years group (see Fig. 13 below).

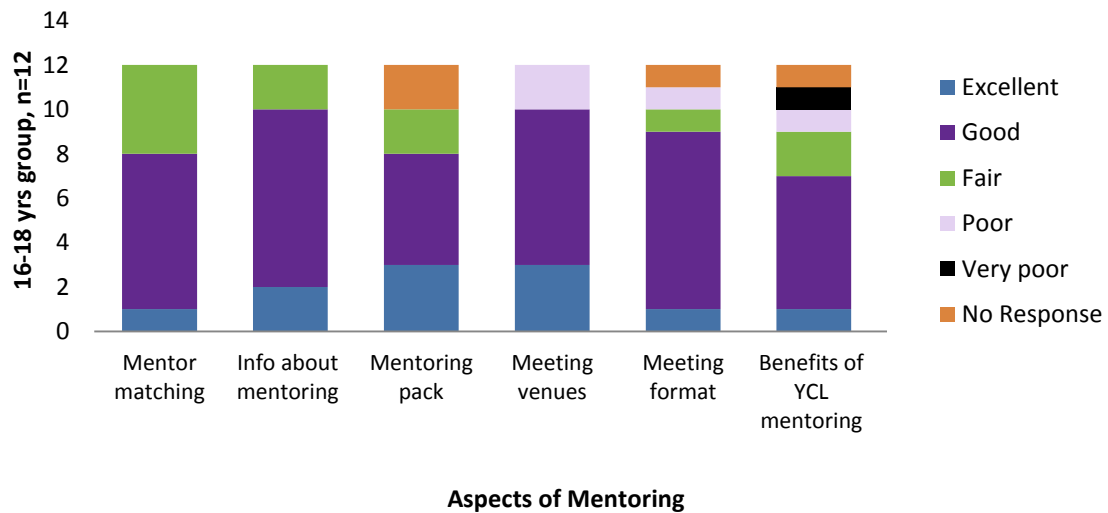


Figure 13: 16-18 Years Participants’ Final Assessment of Mentoring

The 19-25 years ratings are shown in Fig. 14 overleaf. As the level of engagement with mentoring was lower in the 19-25 years group some were unable to offer a complete assessment.



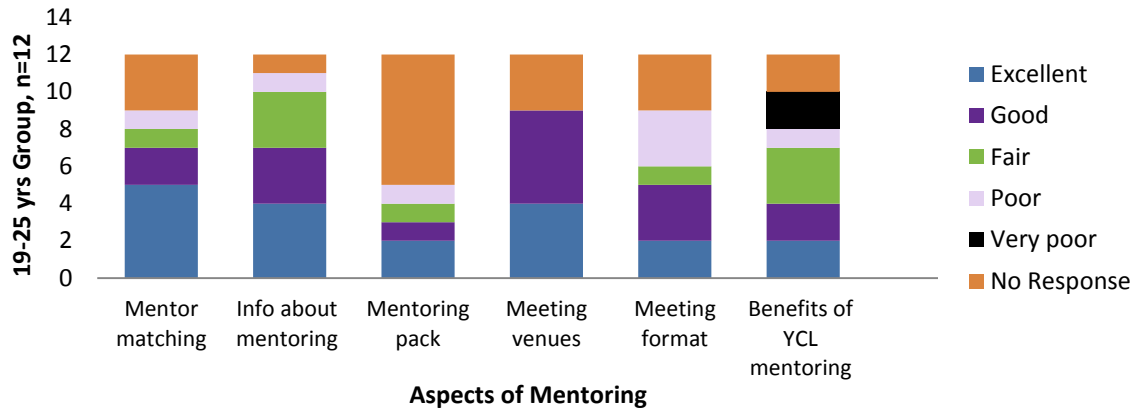


Figure 14: 19-25 Years Participants' Final Assessment of Mentoring

### 5.4.3.6 YCL Mentoring in Context

The mentoring component was included by the YCL Programme implementation team in

**The following is a short article written by a YCL Pilot Programme participant and her mentor. The article appeared in the YCL Newsletter in May 2012.**

**My View as a Mentee**

*Some people feel they shouldn't have been matched with that mentor, which is alright – everybody is going to feel different about it. Like I felt I was matched perfectly grand – the mentor I had was great. When we would meet up for an hour all we would do is talk about my problems or issues in the course, school and outside of them. I used to feel stressed a lot but when I was talking to her about it she said “take an hour out of each day and chill just for that hour.”, so I did and now I'm not as stressed anymore. She said to me that she has seen a big leap in my confidence, talking to people and just being myself. I think a part of that is owed to her.*

**My View as a Mentor**

*I joined the mentoring process with YCL as I believed the experience could be valuable, insightful and fun for those involved. Being a mentor for YCL has really opened my eyes to all the raw talent there is out there in terms of young people and their leadership potential. For most people involved it meant reaching outside your comfort zone and developing a professional relationship with a mentee/mentor. Mentoring gave me a unique opportunity to facilitate a mentee's professional and personal growth. My relationship with my mentee was very productive as we had aims set out for each meeting. Often people dismiss it as not worth the time and energy but being a mentor is important and you can get more out of the relationship than you think. Mentoring allows you to strengthen your leadership skills. It can give you a fresh perspective on your own work and can highlight the areas that you need to work on for your own development.*

good faith. The mentors received appropriate Garda clearance and they were willing to give generously of their time. However, there was insufficient clarity of purpose from the implementation team at the beginning of the mentoring component and insufficient facilitation and monitoring of the process as the programme unfolded. The programme team underestimated the time-commitment that was required of the mentors. Although engagement in mentoring formed part of the YCL Participant Contract, participants tended to view mentoring as a peripheral activity and consequently gave it a low priority. Allied to this, the participants were already heavily tasked with course work and school, college or work commitments.

To help us to understand why the mentoring component of YCL was not as successful as had

been envisaged it is useful to look at best practice mentoring and emerging trends.

Foróige's Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ireland (BBBS) is an internationally proven youth mentoring programme operated by Foróige in Ireland for the past ten years. The programme matches young people to caring adult volunteers who provide mentoring support, guidance and encouragement to assist them in their school, family, and community lives. Training is extensive and it is estimated that it can take six months for a mentoring programme to be successful. In this context, the YCL mentoring model was overly-ambitious. The training provided to the mentors did not allow sufficient time for role play and practice exercises and it was unrealistic to expect community leaders from a diverse background, some with limited youth-work experience, to mentor young people successfully with minimal training.

While some mentoring relationships were successful, some mentees demonstrated disrespect and lack of courtesy to their mentors in failing to attend at agreed meeting times without prior notification. Others displayed a lack of maturity in their overall approach to the mentoring process.

The YCL participants belong to a generation which is often referred to as *The Millennials* (those born between 1977 and 1997). Their preference is for short sharp interactions and often they do not have the patience for learning processes that take too long. In the corporate world, many organisations originally favouring traditional mentoring approaches have begun to explore new methods of engaging employees in *The Millennial* age band. One example of this is the emergence of Anonymous or e-Mentoring where communications are conducted online and the mentors and mentees never meet. Another example is Peer Mentoring. In a YouTube video<sup>8</sup> British Telecom's Head of Learning outlines how BT found out through a staff survey that 78% of BT's staff preferred to learn from their peers. As a result the company has initiated a system of peer-to-peer learning where staff make videos and podcasts and learn from each other in a networked way.

In response to the learning and feedback from all involved in mentoring on the YCL Pilot Programme, the programme implementation team has developed an alternative peer-mentoring model for the 2012/2013 YCL participants. The key elements are as follows:

- Peer Mentors will be drawn from YCL's who completed the 2011-12 programme
- The YCL participant group will be divided into four mentoring groups
- The peer mentors will work in pairs to facilitate the mentoring groups
- Each week, one of the groups will meet for their mentoring session for an hour before the programme
- The focus will be on YCL coursework themes and/or sessions being delivered during that month
- The mentors will use Restorative Circles as the primary methodology
- The peer mentoring team will meet with the Co-ordinator/Facilitators monthly and the focus for mentoring sessions for each month will be agreed at the meeting.

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<sup>8</sup> BT YouTube video "Dare2Share Project at BT"

- At the meeting, Peer Mentors will have an opportunity to feedback any difficulties that participants are raising in their groups
- At the meeting, Peer Mentors will also have an opportunity to reflect on their own practice, and be supported in their own learning and development

The above approach will ensure that participants receive practical help – particularly with the ASLFL reflective exercises which some of the Pilot Programme participants found challenging. The new model will also provide an opportunity for YCL graduates to act as role models for new groups of participants.

However, it is also important for the participants to have exposure to established community leaders and to have a mechanism for learning the community leadership ropes from those with more experience than themselves. If YCL participants are to be successful in community leadership roles it will be necessary for them to be able to relate to people of all ages and to place a value on more experienced community leaders' advice and guidance. YCL's deserve to be listened to at community level but in turn they must also become adept at listening to and learning from others in the community.

#### **5.4.4 Young Community Innovators (YCI)**

Formed in June 2012, the YCI group (a sub-group of YCL participants) is active and dynamic. The group has launched the YCI Facebook page and has set up a Twitter account. The Young Community Innovators meet on a weekly basis and are currently acting as a valuable resource for organisations who wish to canvass the views of youth in the Northside community. Example of this are:

- A local drugs task force conducted a focus group session with the YCI group as part of its research into the incidence of drug misuse in the Northside area.
- The YCI group was invited to send a representative to participate in a Focus Group for Beaumont Hospital.
- The YCIs will be invited to work as volunteers at the annual Northside Partnership Education Fair and will be the local spokespeople for young peoples' issues.
- By invitation one YCI participant attended a forum in Belfast which was organised by the Connect Four project – a collaboration between the Northside Partnership and their cross-border partner, Groundwork Northern Ireland.
- YCIs have been consulted by a local church group who are interested in training a group of young people to participate in a Suicide Prevention Programme.
- YCI members have been invited to participate in a NEAR FM (local radio) interview.
- In an effort to combat bullying in the area the YCI group has produced an evocative anti-bullying DVD. The group plans to screen this in local schools and youth organisations during 2012/2013.
- It is envisaged that the YCI group will play a leading role in introducing the Restorative Practices model into local schools and youth organisations and will serve as youth role models and spokespersons within the community and for future YCL course participants.

The YCL anti-bullying initiatives and the need for YCL to introduce Restorative Practices into local schools and organisations are highly compatible activities.

#### **5.4.5 Community Action Projects**

One of the resounding developmental successes of the programme was the participants' completion of Community Action Projects. Twenty-two of the 24 YCL participants have already completed 20-hour Community Action Project placements and the remaining two are due to complete during 2012. Participating organisations included St Luke's Youth Club; the Church of St. John the Evangelist Youth Clubs; Sphere 17 Youth Club; Dublin City University (DCU) Intergenerational Learning Programme; Foroige Youth Project and Oxfam.

Under the guidance of the YCL programme facilitators the participants also created their own Community Action Project groups to: (1) Market the 2012/2013 YCL programme (2) Co-ordinate the recruitment days for 2012/2013 group of YCLs and (3) Interview and select the new participants, in conjunction with the Programme Management and Implementation team. The requirement by most organisations to have prior Garda Clearance in place for YCL participants meant that some organisations were unable to offer Community Action Project placements.

Many organisations require volunteers to be Garda vetted and the length of time involved in obtaining Garda Clearance proved to be a barrier to some participants in securing Community Action Project placements. Some participants felt that earlier notification of the Community Action Project requirements may have helped them to incorporate additional learning from community action opportunities which they encountered during the earlier stages of the YCL programme.

Feedback from YCL Pilot Programme facilitators and Community Action Project supervisors regarding the Community Action project placements has been extremely positive with supervisors providing encouragement and developmental critique and guidance in equal measure. The following comments are representative of the participants' experiences Community Action Project experiences:

- *"I really matured after this project alone. I gained great leadership experience and had a clearer picture of the leader that I am going to be."*
- *"I have learned valuable lessons to aid my future leadership experiences."*
- *I learned a lot and I used what I learned from YCL."*

#### **5.4.6 Cadbury's Spots V Stripes Events**

The aim of Cadbury's Spots V Stripes was to get people of all ages and abilities involved in rediscovering the spirit of play activity and light-hearted competition. The project involved a variety of community groups such as residents' associations, older adult groups and youth projects in an effort to deliver imaginative community events. These events ranged from large scale Community Fun Days and Sports Days to Fundraising Coffee Mornings and Teambuilding Workshops. Although not an original component of the YCL Pilot Programme, Cadbury's Spots V Stripes captured the imagination of the YCL participants who readily took on responsibilities connected to the staging of over 50 community events.

Spots V Stripes events are organised by community volunteers who gain valuable experience as a result of their involvement. Included in each event are games such as

Giant Jenga; Giant Tiddlywinks; Welly Wangling Competitions; Target Games; sporting events such as Soccer and Basketball and traditional sports-day races such as Space Hopper, Sack Race and the Three-legged Race.

YCL Spots V Stripes volunteers took responsibility for roles such as event planning; event coordination; stewarding; registration; photography; games supervision; score keeping and First Aid provision. YCL volunteers were also provided with in-house training in areas such as Event Site Plan Development and Risk Management.

Collectively, 22 YCL participants contributed a total of over 1,400 hours (for some, up to 5.5 hours per week in addition to their weekly YCL course work) to volunteering and leading at Cadbury's Spots V Stripes events. YCL participants from both YCL age groups worked together in delivering Cadburys Spots V Stripes events under the guidance of YCL Facilitator, Jacqui Ward.

## 5.5 Comparison Group – Findings:

A comparison group of 16 young people aged between 16-25 years was formed following consultation with secondary schools, youth clubs and other community organisations. At the beginning of the programme a Comparison Group Baseline Telephone Interview and Online Survey (Appendices 7 and 8) were conducted. The same questions were repeated in a final telephone interview at the end of the YCL programme. The objective was to establish the initial community leadership involvement of the comparison group and to compare this with final responses to determine the extent of the change, if any, in the level of community involvement of this group during the YCL programme period.

- Of the 16 sixteen young people who formed the comparison group, four were already involved as volunteers in organisations in their community when surveyed at the starting point of the YCL Pilot Programme in 2011. An additional three participants in the 16-18 age group had been somewhat exposed to volunteering work through transition year work experience and/or completion of the Gaisce President's award. Four did not respond to requests to participate in the September 2012 interviews. Of the remaining 12 there was little conclusive evidence that those who were previously involved as volunteers in organisations in their communities had either significantly increased their involvement by devoting additional hours, or significantly strengthened their involvement by taking on additional responsibilities.
- The comparison group research suggests that the YCL Pilot Programme participants were more successful in sustaining, strengthening and deepening their involvement in organisations in the community. However, the comparison group sample size was small and other variables may have influenced the results.

Forming the comparison group proved to be particularly challenging. Many young people initially declined the opportunity as they could not see how their involvement might benefit them. However, two members of the comparison group whose interest was sparked by the telephone survey, expressed interest in joining the 2012/2013 YCL Programme and one has joined.

## 6. Meet the YCL Pilot Programme Graduates

The following information has been extracted from the participant final interviews:

### *YCL 16-18 years age group*

**1.** Since joining YCL, this participant has begun volunteering work for the youth wing of a national political party and has contributed 145 hours to Spots V Stripes Community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself... is that I can work in teams.”**

**“The thing I learned about life... is that you have to make things happen – you can’t just wait around.”**

**“Why YCL was worthwhile... I have become more involved in the community and I am more determined to improve the community.”**

**2.** Since joining YCL, this participant has continued to volunteer in her local youth club and has contributed over 17 hours to Spots V Stripes Community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself... is what I want to do and how I will approach it.”**

**“The thing I learned about life... is right from wrong – what’s good and what’s bad.”**

**“Why YCL was worthwhile... because everyone now knows what they want to do in life and we have all gained confidence.”**

**3.** Since joining YCL, this participant has continued with her studies and has secured employment. Although not currently volunteering she intends to return to volunteering in her local youth club.

**“The thing I learned about myself... is that I can achieve my goals.”**

**“The thing I learned about life... is that there is always a course out there that will suit you.”**

**“Why YCL was worthwhile... because I will try to achieve all my goals. I know I want to be a youth leader and help out disadvantaged children.”**

**4.** Since joining YCL, this participant has continued volunteering in her local youth club and has contributed almost 30 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself... is how I can communicate more with people through this programme.”**

**“The thing I learned about life... is that there are different directions I can go in and I’m clearer now.”**

**“Why YCL was worthwhile... because it’s a great course and I’ve gotten to know other people from different areas.”**

5. Since joining YCL, this participant has significantly increased his volunteering commitments and now contributes over 20 hours per week as a volunteer youth worker in local youth clubs. He has contributed over 100 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I am a lot more capable of doing things than I thought I was.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that it’s not all cut and dried – it’s all choppy”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because it’s getting youth off the streets and into gear for any work they may seek to find in the future.”

6. Prior to joining YCL, this participant was not involved in organisations in her community. Since joining YCL she has contributed over 175 hours to Spots V Stripes Community Events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I can actually do things.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that I’ve got a lot more confidence in the past year.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because it has given us so much more skills and I think that’s very worthwhile for this community.”

7. Since joining YCL, this participant has significantly increased her involvement in her local youth clubs.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I can be quite a confident person if I can bring it out in myself.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that nothing is impossible.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because it has given us a YCL qualification which will be put to good use.”

8. Since joining YCL, this participant has significantly increased her community involvement and has taken on additional responsibilities in her local youth clubs and in a Special Olympics basketball club. She contributed over 105 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is how I actually deal with conflict and the bad habits that I had, and how not to do it that way.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is, enjoy it!”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** it has taught me a lot about leadership and it has been a great part of my life.”

**9.** Since joining YCL, this participant has significantly increased his youth leadership work in local youth clubs and is now also involved at committee level. He has contributed over 80 hours to Spots V Stripes Community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I can be confident – I wasn’t before and I was nervous if I had to stand up and deal with people. Now I am more confident and will say things when they need to be said.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that it can be hard but you still have to push on. I have learned that I have to deal with some things and I can take whatever life throws at me.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because it has helped me to speak up and I have no problem in making suggestions or giving my opinion.”

**10.** Since joining YCL, this participant has contributed almost 100 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I’m getting more confidence.”

**The thing I learned about life...** is that I know what pressures people in leadership roles have.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because I have become a better leader and have more confidence to pursue leadership.”

**11.** Since joining YCL, this participant has continued to work as a volunteer in a charity shop and has contributed 115 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is how to be more organised and have set-times for study. I am more reliable because I am scheduling things properly.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that I have a better approach – I have a more realistic perception of life.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** I got a lot out of it and I can use it in the future.”

**12.** Since joining YCL, this participant has taken time out from youth work to focus on her studies. She participated in a Spots V Stripes community event during the year.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I am louder than I realise!”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that it’s not as easy as I thought it was.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because the course has given me more confidence and more friends – especially the facilitators. I see them as people I can go to.”



## *YCL 19-25 years age group*

**1.** Since joining YCL, this participant has progressed to the role of committee member on the parents' committee at her local primary school and has helped in the organisation of a Spots V Stripes community event.

**"The thing I learned about myself...** is that I am an all-rounder."

**"The thing I learned about life...** is that everything can be solved."

**"Why YCL was worthwhile...** I have grown in confidence and have changed my direction – I know more about where I want to be."

**2.** Since joining YCL this participant has contributed over 124 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**"The thing I learned about myself...** is that I am able to do anything once I put my mind to it – if I set a goal and work towards it, I can achieve it."

**"The thing I learned about life...** is to have a more positive outlook and if you think positive, positive things will happen – and to take the opportunities that are presented."

**"Why YCL was worthwhile...** I have grown in confidence and overall I think I am a better person."

**3.** Since joining YCL this participant has continued to volunteer in her local youth club and has also contributed 25 hours to Spots V Stripes Community events.

**"The thing I learned about myself...** is that I that I have a passive leadership style and don't like conflict, but I have to deal with it."

**"The thing I learned about life...** is that it's important to be a part of your community. Everyone should experience volunteering at some stage – you get out as much as you put in."

**"Why YCL was worthwhile...** because of YCL I am more inclined to take responsibility for putting my ideas forward."

**4.** Since joining YCL this participant has contributed ten hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**"The thing I learned about myself...** is that I should be more confident in my own abilities. I always under-estimated myself and as a result of this course I believe in myself more."

**"The thing I learned about life...** is that it only happens once – enjoy it while you can and try to help people as much as you can."

**"Why YCL was worthwhile...** it has basically changed the way that I am. I feel more of a leader now than I have ever been."

5. Since joining YCL, this participant has begun to volunteer in a charity shop and has contributed 37 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is to trust and believe in myself and don’t let someone’s opinion of you become your reality. And don’t take anything personally.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is to help people and get to know yourself – the better you know yourself the better you know others.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** I’m thankful that someone gave the money to fund this programme – it’s what I would do if I had a load of money.”

6. Since joining this participant has continued to volunteer in her local community playgroup and has contributed over 40 hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I can do things on my own.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is to always look at things from all angles.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** it has changed my life. I am a more positive person now.”

7. Since joining YCL this participant has continued with her youth leadership work and has contributed ten hours to Spots V Stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is my leadership style.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is how to react to others in a positive way.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** I have learned an awful lot and I have used my learning in everyday life and in voluntary positions.”

8. Since joining YCL, this participant has continued to contribute over seven hours per week to youth work and to his local boxing club.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is confidence, and that the answer is always there.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that it’s never too late to start a new career.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile for me ...** I will continue to work in social care. What this course offers is not just a piece of paper.”

9. Since joining this participant has continued to contribute over seven hours per week to youth leadership work and has participated in the organisation of a Spots V Stripes community event.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I’m always focused and have set goals and targets – this is both good and bad!”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is to go with the flow.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** it has offered me a better insight into youth and community work and has helped me to get jobs.”

**10.** Since joining YCL, this participant has progressed from being a Special Olympics basketball volunteer to basketball coach. He contributed 45 hours to Spots V stripes community events.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I didn’t believe in myself in the beginning and just from this course I have so much self-belief and confidence.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is to try to be positive and look towards the future and forget about the past.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because I now have the drive to help people less fortunate than myself and to help to get organisations off the ground.”

**11.** Since joining YCL, this participant has continued to volunteer in her local youth club, has volunteered for Spots V Stripes Community events and has joined her local community group where she co-ordinated a local area clean-up.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I have the power to become more confident and that when I put my mind to something I know I can do it. If you fail, just climb back on the horse again.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that it is better to get involved in as many things as I can rather than sitting around.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** because I’ve grown up in YCL and outside. People dropped out but I stuck with it and have gotten a lot out of it. It will stay with me forever.”

**12.** Since joining YCL, this participant has continued with her voluntary youth work and progressed to being a board member. She has contributed over 250 hours to Spots V Stripes Community events and has secured employment as a youth leader.

**“The thing I learned about myself...** is that I can be very focused and once I set a clear goal I can achieve it.”

**“The thing I learned about life...** is that you can always become a shepherd among sheep – there is no point in trying to fit in when you want to stand out.”

**“Why YCL was worthwhile...** not many people give you a chance. Everything costs money. They believed I could do it and I did. I feel I earned it.”

## 6.1 YCL – Deepening and Strengthening Community Involvement

Responses to the Participant Final Interview (Appendix 11, Part B, Q.4 and Q.5) show that of the 24 programme completers, 15 either increased their involvement by devoting additional hours, or strengthened their involvement by taking on additional responsibilities. Fig. 15 below shows the baseline and final number of hours per week contributed to organisations in the community by the 16-18 years participants group who completed the YCL Pilot Programme.

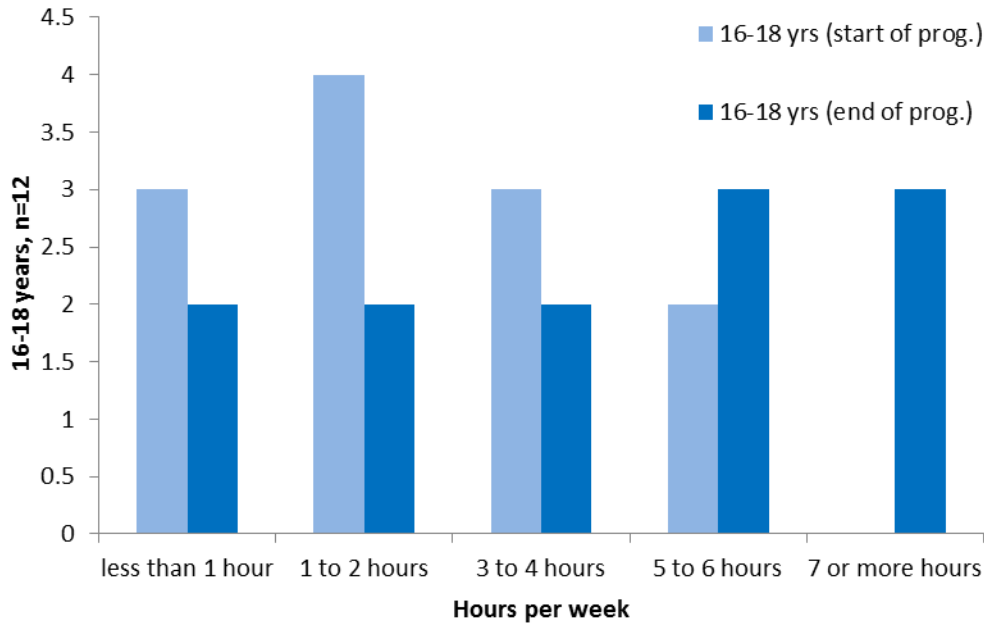
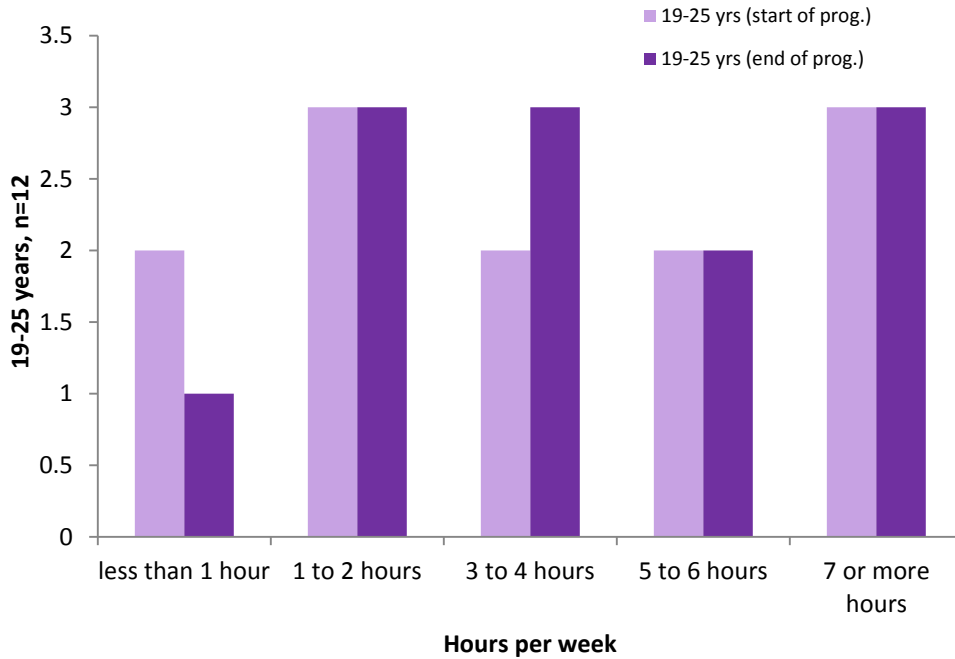


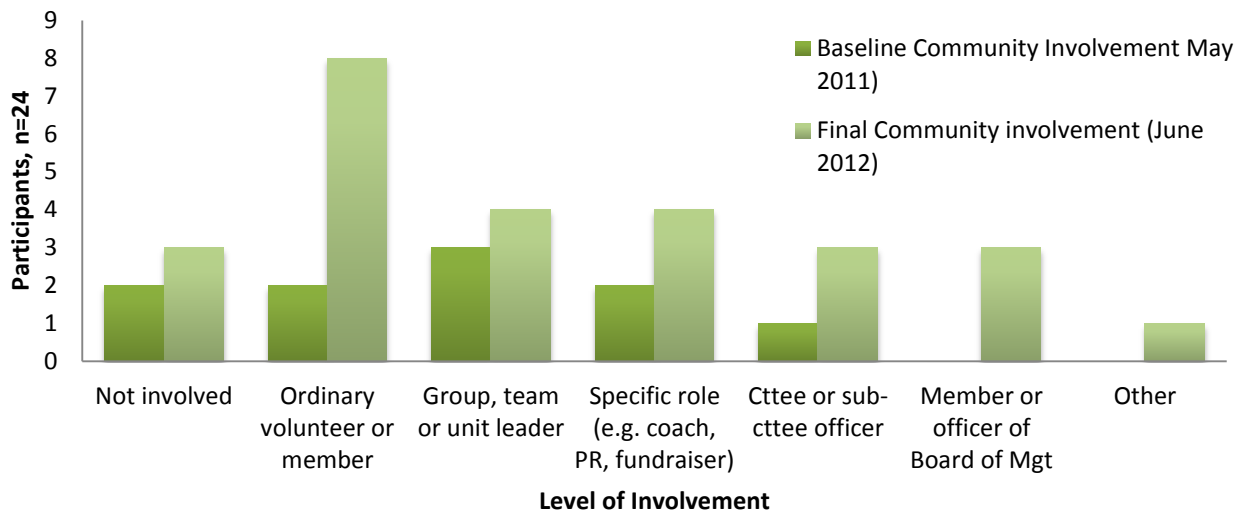
Figure 15: 16-18 Years Group - Average Weekly Hours' Involvement - Before and After YCL

Fig. 16 below shows the baseline and final number of hours per week contributed to organisations in the community by the 19-25 years participants group who completed the YCL Pilot Programme.



**Figure 16: 19-25 Years Group - Average Weekly Hours' Involvement - Before and After YCL**

At the end of the YCL Pilot Programme the selected participants were involved at varying levels in organisations or clubs in their community. Some participants had become involved in new organisations and many had progressed in their existing roles or had taken on additional responsibilities. Fig. 17 below shows the combined movement in levels of responsibility for those who completed the YCL Pilot Programme.



**Figure 17: YCL Involvement in Organisations in the Community - a Before and After Comparison**

Question 6 of the Participant Baseline Telephone Interview (Appendix 7) explored the extent to which participants sought leadership responsibilities on joining an organisation. This question was repeated in the Participant Final Interview (Appendix 11, Part A, Q.6). At the beginning of the programme 8% of the 24 YCL Programme graduates initially reported that they preferred to “participate as ordinary members”, 58% preferred to “wait and take on leadership responsibilities if asked” and 33% reported that they preferred to “actively seek leadership responsibilities. At the end of the programme there was no significant change in the graduates’ recorded preferences.

In Question 9, Part B of the Final Participant Telephone Interviews (Appendix 11) the graduates were once again asked to rate themselves [*on a four-point Likert Scale ranging from: rarely (1) to consistently (4)*] on a set of 16 leadership characteristics such as confidence, openness to change, goal-setting ability and self-belief. Participants’ baseline scores were compared with their final scores. In the 19-25 year age group the average percentage score of the 12 graduates at both the beginning and end of the programme remained the same, at 83%. In the 16-18 year age group the average percentage score for the 12 graduates was 82% at the beginning of the programme and had decreased to 80% at the end of the programme.

The responses to questions 8 and 9 of the Participant Final Interview were puzzling. Given the participants’ stated and self-evident growth in confidence and leadership skills it would be reasonable to expect that as a direct result of the programme, there would be an increase in their recorded desire to “actively seek leadership positions” and an increase in their leadership self-rating scores. We went back to a representative group of participants and they offered us the following possible explanation:

- When participants provided the baseline information in the opening week of the YCL Programme they were unsure of their position and were anxious to make a good first impression, therefore they rated themselves in a more favourable light. (Response distortion – also known as “faking good” – is a recognised feature in personality testing, recruitment interviews and other situations where people have to estimate their own skills and capabilities by self-rating.)
- At the beginning of the programme participants were unaware of the extent of their own leadership limitations and of how much they had yet to learn, therefore they rated themselves in a more favourable light. However, at the end of the programme, participants were more aware of their shortcomings and accordingly, gave themselves a more realistic rating.
- The final interview took place with the evaluator on a face-to-face basis and this was considered by the participants to be “more real” than the online survey.

In the Participant Final Interview (Appendix 11, Part C, Q.9), participants were asked about their development through YCL. They were given nine statements and were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with each statement [*on a five-point Likert Scale ranging from: Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)*]. Their responses are summarised as follows:

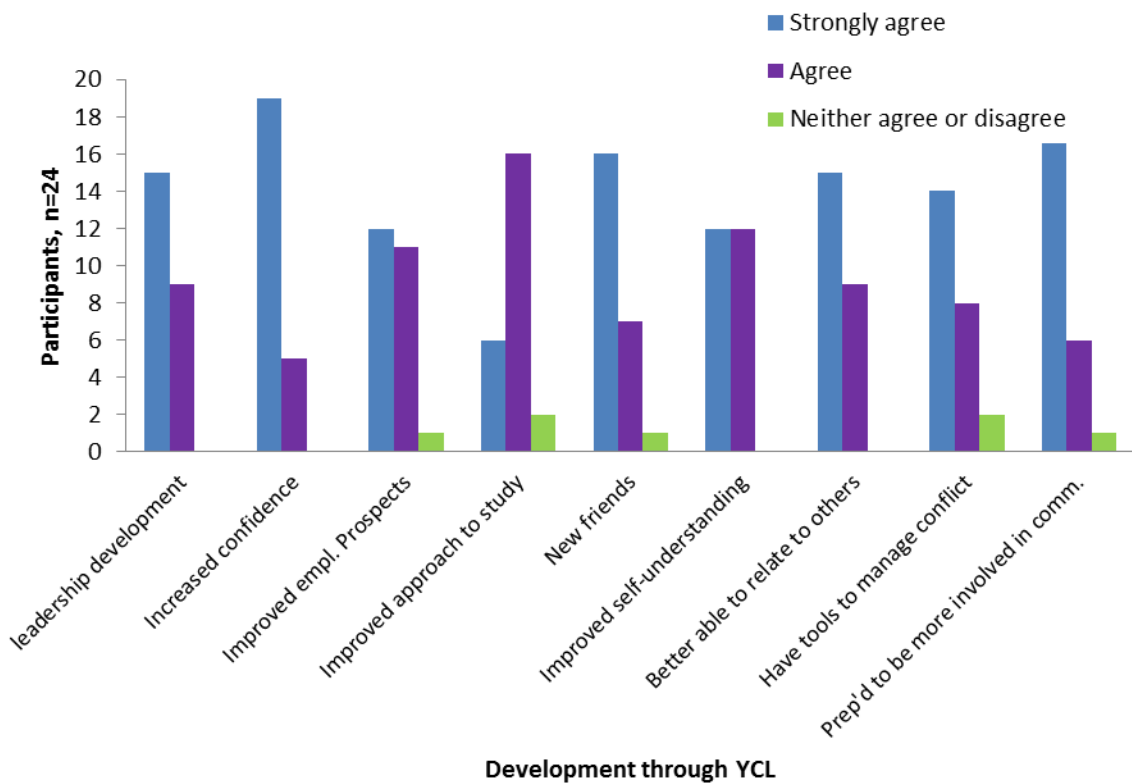


Figure 18: Participants' Estimate of their Development through YCL

## YCL Participants' Community Involvement at a Glance

- 4800 =** The approximate hours of community involvement that YCL participants continued to devote to the organisations they were involved in during the 12 month period beginning June 2011. (See notes 1 and 2 below)
- 440 =** The approximate hours that YCL participants spent on Community Action Projects in 2012.
- 1443 =** The approximate hours that YCL participants contributed to Spots V Stripes community events in 2011/2012.
- 450 =** The approximate hours devoted by a core of 16 YCL participants to the Young Community Innovators Group in the five month period from June 2012-October 2012.

**Note 1:** 50 weeks involvement is assumed.

**Note 2:** The number of hours involvement is taken from the mid point between the stated maximum and minimum hours' involvement for each participant.

## 7. Pilot Programme Recommendations

The formative nature of the YCL Pilot Programme evaluation has meant that most changes and improvements have been woven into the YCL Pilot programme and the YCL 2012/2013 Programme as they emerged. The following are the key recommendations:

### Northside Area Research

1. In order to gauge the long-term effects of the YCL programme and the incremental increase in youth civic engagement over time, it is recommended that YCL keep a record of all aspects of YCL participants' community engagement (including Community Action Project hours and YCL initiatives) for each programme.

### Participation and Retention

2. The YCL Programme requires participants to make a significant time commitment to attending classes and engaging in Community Action Projects. It is vital that those selected for future YCL programmes already have a proven interest in volunteering coupled with a strong track record of reliability. It is also important that the recruitment team has leeway to exercise discretion in awarding places to a small percentage of applicants who may not yet have a proven track record but who can demonstrate genuine interest in becoming a YCL participant.
3. The implementation team involved a group of YCL Pilot Programme participants in the planning, publicising and staging of the recruitment process and in acting as spokespersons for the programme. This benefitted the participants in that they gained first-hand experience of recruitment while the applicants benefitted from learning about the YCL Programme from those who had already been through it. To facilitate the multiplier effect and to further develop YCL graduates, their involvement in future YCL Programmes should be encouraged.
4. The 2012/2013 YCL Programme began with an introductory night in the first week in September 2012 with both age groups coming together for a full weekend of activity on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2012. The September start should help to lessen the incidence of early participant drop-out experienced after the Pilot Programme Summer 2011 break. Attendance should be closely monitored in the early stages of the programme.
5. The use of the Forte Communications Profile enabled the facilitators to ensure a mix of activities and exercises which catered for all communications styles. In future programmes particular attention should be paid to the group profile in the early stages. As in the Pilot Programme the facilitators should ensure that all communication styles are accommodated through a variety of facilitation methods such as paired and small group discussions, team activities and full group activities.

### Programme Management and Implementation

6. The membership of the Steering Group was diverse and the inclusion of participants on a rotational basis should be continued. The addition of leaders from the youth and the business sectors is strongly recommended. If the YCL Programme is to be sustained in the long-term, it is essential that the Steering Group has the capacity to fund-raise and priority should now be given to securing funds for the 2013/2014 programme. One approach may be to encourage clubs, schools and youth groups to



sponsor individual YCLs. A sponsor for a certificate awards ceremony where YCL achievements are celebrated and publicised could also be sought.

### **Communications**

7. The 2012/2013 participants received detailed programme information from the implementation team and the pilot programme participants during information sessions, recruitment days and through the YCL recruitment literature and newsletter. This approach is recommended for future programmes.
8. The use of Facebook should be continued as the main method of communicating with participants outside programme contact hours.
9. The 2012/2013 YCL programme was advertised on the Northside Partnership website. In pursuit of sustainability the programme should consider enhancing its web presence, either through the existing Northside Partnership portal, or in a domain of its own. In support of its fundraising strategy, the programme should ensure that Community Action Projects undertaken by YCLs are highlighted in local print media and through Near FM.

### **Facilitation**

10. The teamwork between the facilitators was excellent. Given the workload involved in co-ordinating the YCL Pilot Programme, it is recommended that a team of four facilitators be retained. This allows the facilitators to alternate and ensures adequate cover at all times.

### **Programme Design and Components**

11. In future YCL Programmes the STEPS and Foróige ASLFL Programmes should be retained as they are effective, essential components of YCL. In future programmes time should be made available for participants to complete the Foróige ASLFL reflections in the classroom and for the mentors to support the participants in completing their reflections. This has already been factored into the plans for the 2012/2013 YCL programme.
12. The programme implementation team has already identified the need to initiate the Community Action Projects (ASLFL Module 3) at an earlier stage in the academic year to enable all programme administration to be completed by June and to ensure course work and project placements are completed well in advance of the state and college examination period. The team should meet with Foróige representatives before the start of the Foróige ASLFL modules to share the learning from the Pilot Programme and to agree deadlines for submission of the documents necessary for participants to achieve accreditation.

### **Restorative Practices**

13. The introduction of Restorative Practices into schools and youth settings in the Northside community requires a whole-community approach. While the YCL group is currently mandated to facilitate this process it may need a more strategic and concentrated approach than the group is equipped to provide. It is recommended that the YCL Programme establish a Restorative Practices Community Team with representation from interested YCL Pilot Programme mentors, youth leaders and school staff who have completed Restorative Practices training. They should work

with the YCI group in spearheading an awareness campaign and in implementing a strategic plan for making Northside an RP community.

### **Mentoring**

14. Many Pilot Programme participants benefitted from their mentoring relationship with experienced community leaders. While a different model of mentoring (Peer Mentoring) is being introduced for the 2012/2013 YCL Programme there is a case for ensuring that YCL participants also have exposure and access to trusted, experienced leaders. Some mentors have signalled an interest in remaining connected with the programme and YCLs should be offered an opportunity to consult with them by appointment should they need guidance on specific issues and initiatives. It may be possible for some of the members of the proposed Restorative Practices Community Team (see 13. above) to act in this capacity.
15. The programme should continue to include a limited number of Leadership Insight talks from local community leaders. This would be particularly beneficial before participants begin their Community Action Projects so that they would gain a clear understanding of what is expected. Graduate participants could also be invited to share the learning from their Community Action Projects.

### **Community Action Projects**

16. The long lead-time in procuring Garda Clearance acted as a barrier for some participants in obtaining placements. A solution needs to be found to ensure that next year's participants can avail of a wider range of Community Action Project placements. In addition, the participants need to be mobilised earlier in the programme to take responsibility for securing a placement.
17. The 2012/2013 YCL Programme should continue to foster opportunities for YCL Pilot Programme graduates to continue to take responsibility for elements (such as recruitment, publicity and mentoring) of future programmes.
18. The Cadbury's Spots V Stripes Programme has officially ended. However, the extent of the participants' engagement in Spots V Stripes suggests that either this or a similar community activity should remain as a central part of the 2012/2013 YCL Programme. This is currently being explored. The programme implementation team has already developed an approach whereby YCL would target organisations and residents' associations in the area and link them to the YCLs in order to stage events such as intergenerational days and residents' association clean-ups.
19. In 2012/2013 in support of its fund-raising strategy, YCL should develop a publicity plan which involves local media in showcasing YCL community activities.

### **Young Community Innovators**

20. The Young Community Innovators are already positioned to become a new resource for the community. Representatives of the 2012/2013 YCL group have now joined the YCL Pilot Programme graduates on the YCI group. The YCL Programme management and implementation team should continue dialogue with organisations in the community to gain the deepest possible understanding of their future leadership requirements and to publicise the availability of the YCI group. In continuing their local anti-bullying campaign and their work in introducing

Restorative Practices in the area, the YCI group should receive formal support from the proposed Restorative Practices Community Team (see 13. above)

**Comparison Group**

21. The Comparison Group was a feature of the Pilot Programme and it will not be necessary to form Comparison Groups for future programmes.

**Programme Evaluation**

22. Future YCL programmes should adopt a more streamlined evaluation approach which focuses mainly on a baseline and final measurement of participants' progress and development and a chronicling of the impact of their community initiatives.

## 8. Sustainability – The Long-term Goal

The YCL Pilot Programme has been both a success and a source of rich learning. The outcomes are testament to the vision of the YCL Programme management and implementation team, the dedication and creativity of the programme facilitators and the commitment of the participants who worked so hard to achieve their leadership goals.

The programme has the potential to transform the community through the individual contributions of the graduates and the participants, through their Community Action Project work and by spearheading a whole-community approach to the introduction of Restorative Practices. To achieve its long-term objectives the YCL Programme needs to become adept at raising funds and generating publicity for its initiatives.

Through their development on the programme, the YCL Pilot Programme graduates now have a clearer understanding of what it takes to be a leader. Through their positive endorsement of the programme, they are now helping to inspire a new group of 40 enthusiastic Young Community Leaders as they set out on their new leadership journey.

The Northside community has played a vital role in the development of the Young Community Leaders Pilot Programme graduates, in return, the community now has 24 enthusiastic, programme ambassadors, many of whom have not only deepened and strengthened their level of participation in their original clubs and groups, but who have also created new opportunities to potentially make a lasting difference in their community.