

## Child and Youth Participation Project



## **Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee - Child & Youth Participation Project**

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Video of the CYPSC Consultation Process Longford Westmeath -[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ZGDCVbfaAM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZGDCVbfaAM)

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Background .....	3
Summary Report of Findings .....	5
Appendices .....	
Appendix 1 – The Voice of the Child Report .....	13
Appendix 2 – Longford Comhairle na nÓg Consultation Report .....	61
Appendix 3 – Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg Consultation Report .....	72
Appendix 4 – Investing in Children Membership Award Evaluation Report .....	75

## Introduction

Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (LW CYPSC) is a key structure identified by the Government to plan and co-ordinate services for children and young people at county level. The LW CYPSC consists of representatives from statutory, community and voluntary agencies and organisations at local level across the two counties. The LW CYPSC work collectively so as to promote the best interests of children and young people in Longford and Westmeath. The committee takes its focus from the five National Outcomes for children and young people, as set out in *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures; the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020* (Fig 1).

## Background

One of the current priorities for the committee is to create opportunities for children and young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes within the two counties. With this in mind The Longford Westmeath CYPSC established a Children and Youth Participation Subgroup to facilitate the active participation of young people in the development of the Children and Young People's three year plan for the area. The membership of this subgroup comprises of the following agencies Family Resource Centre (FRC) Longford/Westmeath, Tusla, Longford County Childcare Committee, Foróige, Barnardos, Youth Work Ireland, Longford and Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg, Westmeath Local Community Development Committee and Westmeath County Council. On receipt of Tusla Seed funding for Child and Youth Participation projects and also seed funding through the LW CYPSC from The Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Children and Youth Participation Subgroup developed the LW CYPSC Child and Youth Participation Project for Longford and Westmeath, based on the "Lundy Model" of participation.

This participation project has been successful in achieving the Investing in Children Award [www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/investing-in-children](http://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/investing-in-children) (Appendix 4)



**Fig 1: National Outcomes. Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures; the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 -2020**



This report is a summary of a comprehensive consultation process, involving approximately 400 children and young people aged 3 to 24 years between Jan and April 2017. 244 young people were involved in facilitated workshops and the remaining were consulted with through projects and services throughout Counties Longford and Westmeath.

### **Participants of the facilitated workshops**

133 young people aged between 3 and 12 years from Counties Longford and Westmeath. Within this age group 63 children were from community crèches with participants in Rathowen Community Crèche being among the youngest at just 3 years of age.

111 young people aged between 12 - 24 years from Counties Longford and Westmeath

The participants were from a range of settings including community crèches, primary schools, secondary schools, youth services/projects, sports organisations and family resource centres.

### **Methodology used**

Workshops took place using the agenda day format as recommended by Investing in Children. They were facilitated by members of Longford and Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg, so as to maximise participation and ensure a youth friendly environment.

The methods used for the 3 – 12 year old category consisted of visual consultations incorporating art, dialogue and self-expression. The workshops were adapted to suit each setting and the children led the direction of each discussion.

## Feedback from 3 -12 Age Cohort. (See Appendix 1)

Young people identified the following as working well, things they are proud of in their area and things/people that are important to them:

Geographical area	Identified activity/amenity	What is important	Identified by setting
Ballynacarrigy	Natural and built treasures - the bog, the green, the canal. Speech and drama club.	Family, pets, teachers, environment, clean water, me, neighbours, sports.	National School
Granard	Music, festivals, GAA, sports clubs, their community, the library, the resource centre, gardens, play centre.	Family, pets, community, playing, the earth, friendships, love.	FRC Youthclub
Clonbrusk, Athlone	Community garden, Athlone Castle, the Theatre, Soft play centres, aquarium	Family, my home, pets, garden, outdoor spaces.	Community crèche
Rathowen	Grandparents named as very important part of family life.	Family - grandparents, siblings, home.	Community crèche
Springlawn, Longford	Train, playgrounds, cycling	Family, home, routine (bedtime, meal time)	Community crèche

## Outcome 1: Active and Healthy with physical and mental health

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
<b>Youth Facilities/ Services</b>	Continue to maintain and increase provision of youth facilities and services to meet identified need.	Increase in the number of community based youth activities that will enhance the health of young people - including babies and toddlers.	Respond to the identified need in relation to youth facilities.	<p>Increase youth service provision in an outreach capacity to reach rural areas in Longford.</p> <p>Develop youth and recreation spaces in Longford (Mall Complex, skate park, rural areas) Swimming pool (Ballynacarrigy)</p> <p>Continue to maintain playgrounds and outdoor recreation areas as these were identified as being very important.</p>				
<b>Mental Health</b>	Increase in number of youth mental health services.	Dedicated in number of youth mental services.		Dedicated youth mental health service in Co Longford.				
<b>Healthy Eating</b>		Increase and improve education relating to healthy eating, nutrition, cooking and diet		Education on health eating.				

## Outcome 2: Achieving full potential in learning and development

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
<b>Guidance counseling</b>	Increase and improve the availability of guidance counseling.	Increase in the provision of guidance counseling.		Provide accessible and improved guidance counseling services for young people.				
<b>Life skills</b>	Increase the opportunities for young people to engage in life skills and volunteering programmes	Increase in number of young people volunteering and engaging in life skills programmes		Provide life skills and recognised volunteering opportunities for young people - both in school and in the community		Youth organisations, Education, working group & local businesses		
<b>Third level education</b>	Provide more information on college and alternatives routes to college.	An increase in awareness of choices available in career and college courses - academic routes to employment  Provide training for teachers to support students with disabilities		Increase supports available to inform young people about choices after school - PLC courses, college, Youthreach Centres and Training Courses.				
<b>Teacher training support</b>	Provide training for teachers to support students with disabilities	Increase in disability training opportunities for teachers.		Provide disability awareness training for all teachers				

## Outcome 2: Achieving full potential in learning and development

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
<b>Extra curricular</b>	Continue to support provision of extra curricular activities in schools.			Maintain the current provision of extra curricular activities available to young people and seek to increase and improve this provision in areas that show a need				
<b>Work experience</b>	The inclusion of work experience for students at all stages of second level education (and not just during Transition Year)	The incorporation of work experience for young people throughout second level education		Provide age appropriate work placement opportunities for young people in second level.		Schools, youth organisations, local businesses		

### Outcome 3: Safe and protected from harm

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
<b>Community Watch Programme</b>	Introduce and operate an effective Community Watch Programme	A safe community and environment for young people to grow		Support communities to establish Community Watch Programmes				
<b>Garde Siochana</b>	<p>Reduce number of Garda Stations closing - rural areas</p> <p>Increase Garda presence on streets and give Gardaí more power.</p> <p>Training for Gardaí should be more rigorous and physical.</p>							

## Outcome 4: Economic security and opportunity

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
<b>Development of retail areas in Longford Town</b>	Develop vacant shopping centre in Longford.							
<b>Support for local businesses</b>	Government support for small local businesses to encourage people to shop local.			Make funding available for small local business development Incorporate as part of the leaving cert curriculum				
<b>Increase in practical skills for young people</b>	Increase focus on teaching young people practical skills which are transferrable to careers including money management			Incorporate as part of the leaving cert curriculum				
<b>More affordable student accommodation</b>	Increase provision of student accommodation that are near college campuses			Identify unfinished housing estates in areas close to colleges				
<b>Review of minimum wage</b>	Increase minimum wage							



## Outcome 5: Connected, respected and contributing to their world

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
<b>Information on services</b>	Increase availability of information for children and young people on services			Develop a means of communicating information to children and young people on services available to them				
<b>Youth participation and representation</b>	Increase opportunity for children and young people to participate and be represented on relevant committees	An increase in the participation of children and young people in service planning/ implementation and review		Analysis of current policy and practise in relation to youth participation Continue to provide opportunity for children and young people to input into participation structures.				
<b>More Information on children and young people's rights</b>	Increase information for children and young people in relation to their rights							
<b>Interagency collaboration</b>	Increase communication and collaboration between services, organisations and agencies.							
<b>Inter-cultural awareness</b>	Increase education and awareness of different cultures			Inter-cultural events which promote acceptance and awareness of cultures and religion.				

Outcome 5: Connected, respected and contributing to their world

Priority Area	Objective(s)	Indicators	Target	Activities	Timeframe for completion	Lead responsibility & partners	Link to other plans	Link to other outcomes/ goals
Intergenerational projects	An increase in intergenerational projects			Intergenerational projects to reduce stereotyping of young people and adults. Promote respect and equality				

## Appendix 1

### The Voice of the Child Report

# The Voice of the Child





Diorama at Emper N.S. with their Green Clean Future illustrating ruins of Emper castle transformed.

# Table of Contents:

Introduction: Page 4

Background: Page 4

Participants: Page 4

Aims, Objectives, Methodology: Page 5

Workshop Plans: Page 6

Lus Na Greine F.R.C. Youthclub: Page 8

Emper N.S. Ballynacarrigy: Page 13

Emper N.S. children's report: Page 19

Clonbrusk Childcare Project: Page 27

Stepping Stones, Rathowen: Page 30

Springlawn Community Childcare, Longford: Page 33

Whizzkids, Drumlish: Page 37

Overall Results from Sessions: Page 41

Conclusions Page 42

Thank you Page 43



Introduction to the “The voice of the child”.

This report aims to summarise the activity that took place in the voice of the child project; a form of visual consultation.

This activity centres around reporting on the views and experiences of children and young people across Longford, Westmeath using a visual medium; also through talking about what was made.

### **Background:**

The Voice of the Child Visual consultation forms an aspect of a bigger project looking at the **CYPSC Five National Outcomes**.

1. **Active and healthy with physical and mental well being**
2. **Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development**
3. **Safe and protected from harm**
4. **Have economic security and opportunity**
5. **Connected, respected and contributing to their world**

This visual consultation came about to give a voice to the children to share their experience of the world.

Lus na greine FRC Granard, Caraphort FRC Ballynacarrigy and Longford Childcare Committee nominated the participating settings.

Children with a broad age range from 3 years right through to 12 years old took part in the voice of child project.

133 children took part across this age group.

44 children, Youth club, Lus na Greine, Granard.

26 children, Emper N.S. Ballynacarrigy.

17 children, Springlawn Community Creche,

8 children, Stepping Stones Community Creche, Rathowen,

22 children, Clonbrusk Community Creche, Athlone,

16 children, Whizzkids Community Creche, Drumlish,

Emper National School, Emper, Ballynacarrigy, Co. Westmeath took part in the project as did Youth group from Lus na Greine FRC, Granard and four community creches across the counties listed above.

Clonbrusk Community Creche, Athlone, Whizz Kids Community Creche, Drumlish, Springlawn Community Creche, Longford and Rathowen Community Creche, Rathowen were the youngest participants most whom were just 3 years old.



The Visual consultation took the form of working with the children through artwork and their accompanying dialogue.

This consultation took place in an age appropriate manner. This means the approach was adapted to suit each setting. It is also important to note that time of academic year is also of significance especially in the early year's settings.

**Aims:**

- This consultation aimed to work with a sample of young people to provide a space for their voice to be heard.
- This consultation was process based, it aimed to give voice to the children in relation to the five national outcomes.
- It was necessary to avoid influencing the children and allow their voice to lead interaction.

**Objectives**

- Consult with a sample of young people aged 3- 12 years to provide a space for their voice to be heard.
- Engage with this sample of children and young people through art and creativity.
- Record this work through artwork produced, accompanying dialogue and any other suggestions made with participants.
- The art is to be process based and to be a tool to invite the children to express themselves without the pressure of a desired outcome.
- Record and present the material in the context of the five outcomes.

**Methodology:**

The means of engagement was process based. This meant that while the basis of the workshop content was the same, how the children responded led the sessions and what was recorded. And each was delivered at an age appropriate level.

There were two sessions in each setting. Some of the sessions were also filmed which added another element of authenticity to the project.

One introduction session took place in Emper national school and two follow up sessions. This proved useful as this school really took ownership of their piece of work and presented a report as part of their final session. Please see attached report.

Each community creche had two sessions.

Lus Na Greine had two sessions followed by a closing and outcome based session.

## **Session contents, Workshop plan, samples and results:**

### **Workshop plans:**

At each introduction, Concept of CYPSC and children's voice to be explained at introductory session in age appropriate fashion.

#### **Session 1: "Getting to know you" (3yrs)**

**Aims:** Getting to know you session whereby facilitator, children and leaders get to know each other and children. Here facilitator explains her presence, concept of CYPSC and recording their voice/opinions. Children share picture of themselves and their family through their art.

**Methodology:** Process Driven Approach: introductions, (the facilitator) and the groups, children and setting need to get to know each other. This "getting to know you" exercise is ideal for gaining knowledge of the children and their world.

Using art materials, paper/shapes/colour children explore Who Am I? What/Who is important to me?

**Through materials:** Artist sets up space with space materials stations like free play session. Materials based on family shapes, crayons, pencils, propose the introductory session to get sense of group and personalities.

#### **Session 2: Me, My Family, My Community, My Dreams.**

##### **Pres School Ages 3 yrs. +**

**Aim:** Further development exploring circle of influence, Me, My Community, Me and my family drawing, my home,

Children review pictures from week 1, looking at what they've made, family scene, now questions about play, typical day, where are you? Again reference 5 w's if necessary to encourage discussion in relation to artwork. (who, what, where, when, why)

Using materials assist process, for example using materials that assist in putting the "people" from their picture into a scene.

Scenes will be appear:

indoors/outdoors.

Outside in the community (playground or where else)

Inside at home (or other locations)

What's happening? Who's that, are they working/playing sport etc.

LISTENING at all times with this age group.

#### **Session 1: "Getting to know you" 6-12 yrs. Primary School and After School Groups**

(This age group will engage with material at an age appropriate level, questioning, forming ideas, exploring and sharing ideas.) Here facilitator explains her presence, concept of CYPSC and recording their voice/opinions.

**Methodology:** Process Driven Approach: introductions, both myself (the facilitator) and the groups, children and setting need to get to know each other. Facilitator to pose questions Before Children use a work sheet. Facilitator notes discussion and children use materials to share their view point, Initial picture with ideas forming.

**Who/What's important to you?** (Expand on discussion, e.g. Family/Friends follow thought pattern of children) Make Links.

##### **What have you focused on here?**

Follow if children are using a lot of discussion or are recording visually, give each child a fair chance based on their learning style.

### Questions for discussion workshop:

Introducing the concept of CYPSC national outcomes and wish to hear children's voice to be explained at initial session in age appropriate fashion. More questions to invite topics relevant to the Five national outcomes without undue influence on the discussion.

"What is important to you in your life right now? Or who"? opening up discussion.

1. Who are you?
2. What are your interests?
3. What do you like best - play, hobbies, art etc.?
4. What do you like most about your community?
5. What do you not like about your community?
6. What would you change if you had a choice?

Session 2 - Follow on and build on dreams, aspirations and goals. The children get to express themselves in terms of their place in family and community and ultimately as having a valued opinion and the power to express it

1. Who is in your family
2. Where do you live? Why is it a good/not so good place to live in?
3. What are you good at? What are your dreams?
4. What would you like to do when you grow up?
5. Who or what will help you reach your dreams?
6. Do you feel you have a voice in your community and why is that helpful?

## Results from sessions:

Lus Na Greine FRC Youth club, Granard February and May 2017

Springlawn Community Creche January 2017

Stepping stones Community Creche, Rathowen, February 2017

Clonbrusk Community Creche, Athlone, March 2017

Whizzkids Community Creche, Drumlish April 2017

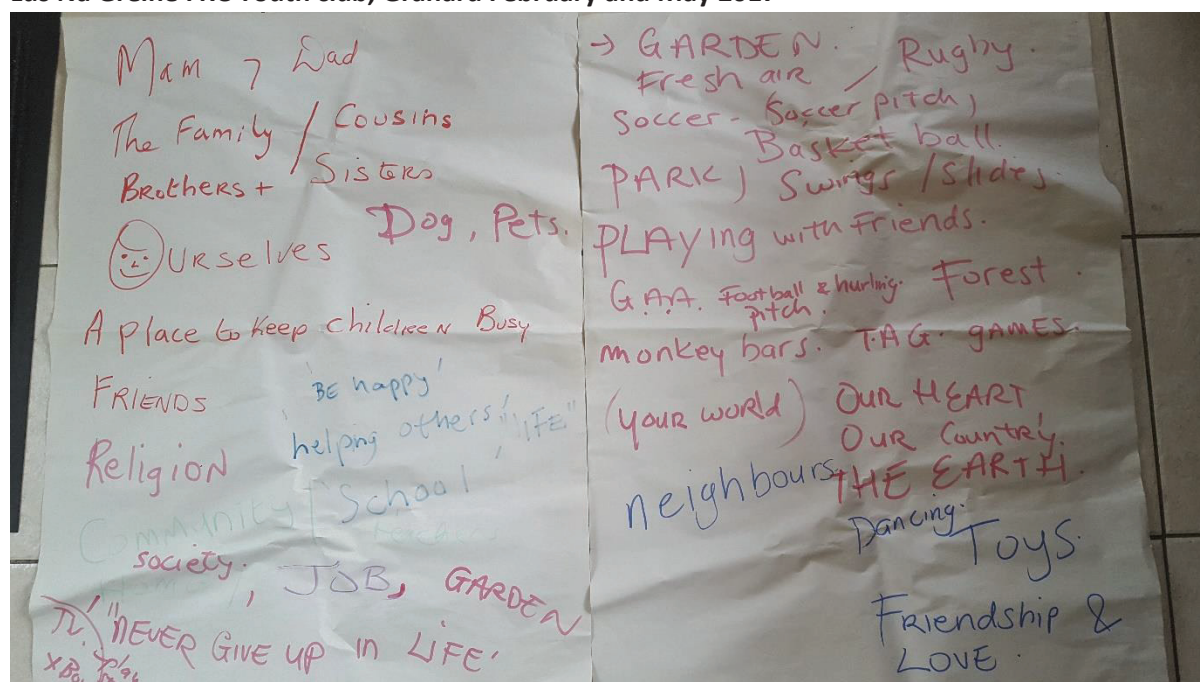
Emper N.S. Ballynacarrigy, March 2017

The main questions asked to each group were: "What is important to you in your life right now? Or who"? This opened the discussion. There were also more questions to invite topics relevant to the Five national outcomes without undue influence on the discussion.

The older children were quite vocal and had plenty to say on this topic. Both Emper N.S. and Lus na Greine FRC discussed what was relevant to them.

Discussion was recorded on the flip charts and white boards. Circle of influence was very evident throughout the discussion and project at large.

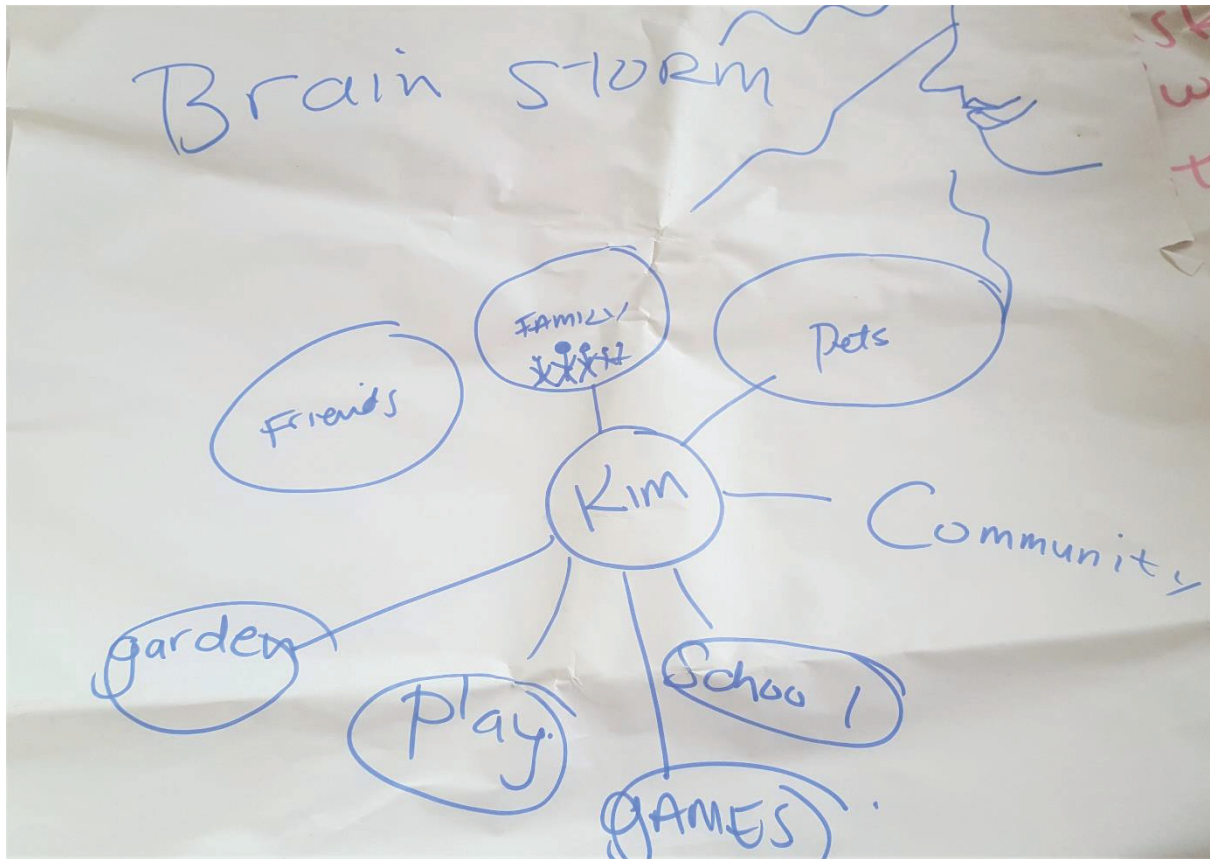
### Lus Na Greine FRC Youth club, Granard February and May 2017



Here is in Lus Na Greine, this youth club have been meeting since the start of the year but they also invited along their friends from school to have their say for this session. This meant 44 young people had their say in this session. The discussion flowed very well and it appeared that the fact the children were familiar with each other but also in relation to their community, they had a vocabulary and an understanding of what the project was about.

They began with **who** was important in their lives. First responses varied between family and family members and some identified themselves as important. Friends, pets, school, community each person getting a mention. On the flipchart facilitator used herself as an example to map what

participants were saying. “the circle of influence was appearing: me, my family, friends, school, community, society, country”.



Lus na Greine brainstorm.

The children also mentioned through the discussion their typical day. Playing games, here outdoors was mentioned a lot, the playground, the garden, also games, sports. What is important in their lives? The children talked about school, books, learning, friends, family. They also talked about lus na greine and their community. There was some sense of community, they also talked about the G.A.A. and the teams they are part of. Other sports and ways to spend their time was mentioned. They talked about a local playground they go to. Some even drew their time in lus na greine among friends. (See top left of the following photo). The children drew a picture to summarise some aspect of the discussion. They also mentioned nature and keeping the environment clean. Farming and



especially pets and animals were mentioned.





Visitors to their area also came up as there are French students in their school. One student attended and was very much a part of the group. The children displayed pride in their schools, local teams and their community. There was a strong sense of the youth club and having discussed their community previously. They also discussed politics and having an impact on their community. This was mentioned very simply about having politicians to ask about roads but displayed their awareness none the less.



Sections of the work created in lus na greine. These pictures include playgrounds, buildings including library church fire station buildings that the children are familiar with. Children playing, and their emotions while playing “happy me” while playing. There are also scenes from their life. In this session; the fire station and fire brigade and a local pub was depicted. This building had experienced a fire and the fire brigade put out the fire. This occurrence was fresh in the children’s mind and



appeared in some pictures. This shows us that the children are depicting their world in their art. It is also evident from this photograph the great age range in this club. There are a lot of homes depicted again showing us how important their families and their home base is.

In the second session, the children discussed what they remembered from the previous session and the facilitator asked about their dreams for their future. They also enjoyed making a banner for the project.

They were strong in their opinions and one girl said she'd like to have the choice of whether she went to school or not. When asked for alternatives some children mentioned home schooling. One or two also mentioned travel. One of the children also announced her win at Texaco poster competition. Another young girl announced her mum expecting a new brother or sister to her. The children like having the space to be themselves and share what is happening in their world.

When asked what new ideas they might have, they talked about their pets, tayto park, the zoo. They settled on a "Bring your pet to club day" which the coordinator promised them.

They also decided to have celebrations for the club and its' achievements. They planned a clown, a magician, foods and opportunity for fun. Clearly the children feel valued here and can share what's happening for them and what they would like to celebrate and also change.



Emper National School, Emper, Ballynacarrigy.

26 children attend Emper N.S. there is a senior room and junior room. The children here have a great sense of community. The children also work very creatively and their learning appears to be predominately project oriented. At the introduction session, there were projects dotted around both the junior and senior room.

At this session; this group were vocal and forthright. They have great pride in their school and community. They displayed a great ability to understand and discuss themselves, their family and community and issues affecting them. The children were very conscious of the environment, their

carbon footprint, their impact. This is evident in their response to the project. They considered what the community might look like with a “green approach”. They have started their own garden, are recycling and are very waste conscious.

The children decided they’d share and chat about their ideas but also illustrate them through a diorama when thinking about 2d and 3d approaches. The junior room produced dioramas while the senior room made a wall display and produced a report. When thinking about the project, the children alongside their teacher made a worksheet based on the discussion (see sample provided). This school were visited by Shane the cameraman who was recording parts of the project while the children were a little star struck and aware of the camera, they presented the facilitator with their report and delivered it verbally to both facilitator and their local family resource centre coordinator Maria Quinn.

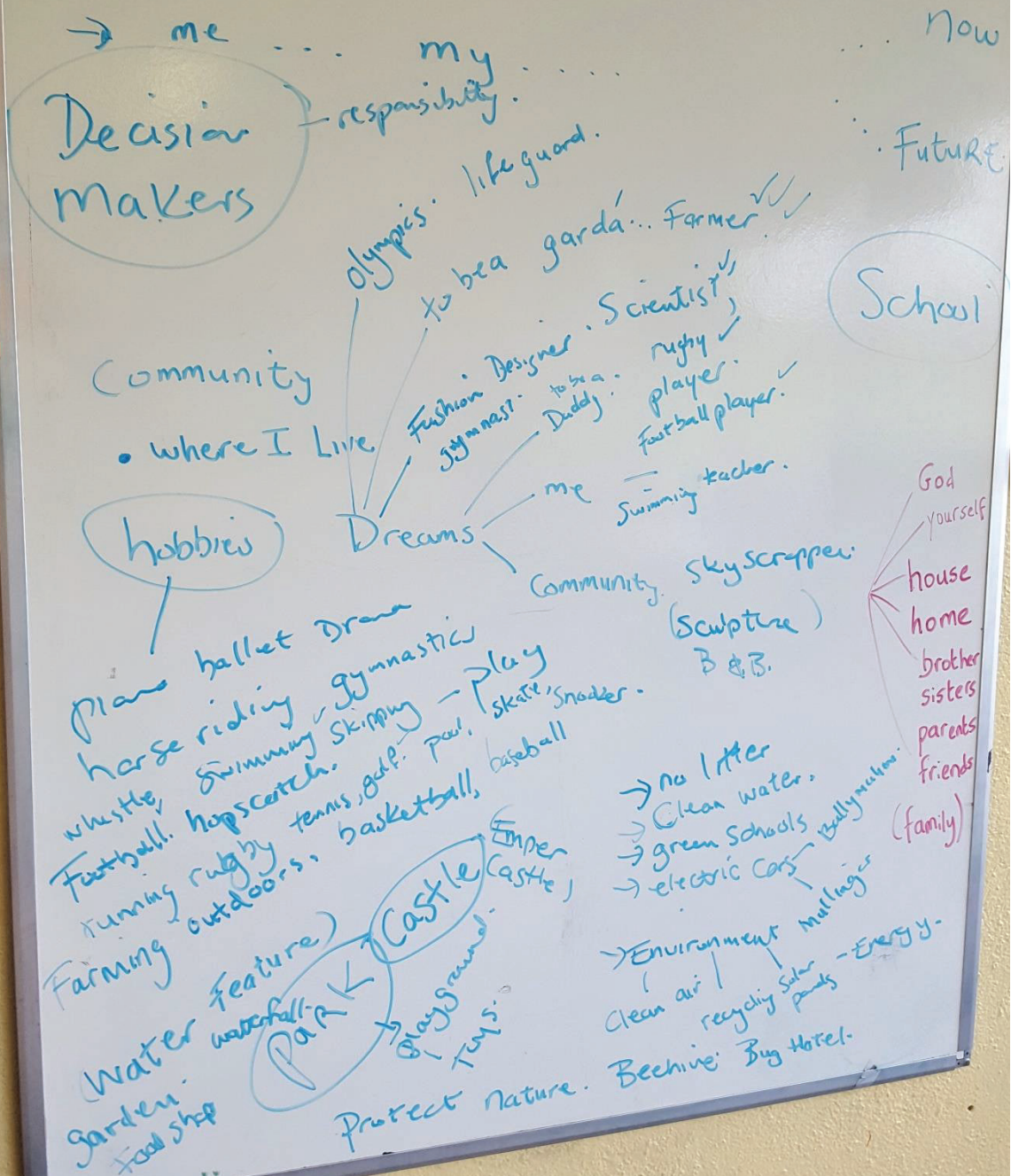
The following pictures illustrate the children’s views.

This group had a great awareness of **their circle of influence**, they talked about **themselves**, their **families, friends, community** but also the “**decision makers**” in their life. The children were aware of **local representatives and the county council** and they also talked about **politics** on a local level but also at a national and international level. The Junior room discussed the **president Michael D. Higgins and United States President Donald Trump**. The teachers mentioned that there were two local T. D’s who the children would be aware of, they felt that politics was a subject most likely being discussed at home and on the news. These children in their discussion were very competent about discussing what is important to them in the present in terms of their families, community especially their hobbies, playground and what life is like for them. Yet they also displayed a great awareness of their future and their dreams. Again, please see photographs of their whiteboard listing all their feedback. Comments include not only **dreams for the children themselves but also dreams for their community**. Again, the environment is evident, electric cars were mentioned, bug hotels, beehives, clean water as well comments like “no litter”. **Dream jobs** are listed as well as plans to maintain and rebuild places in their community (Emper castle). The natural environment as well as experiences from their daily lives appear as they also talked about Whooper Swans and Derek Mooney (RTE) visiting the area to see these rare residents.

Both the sample worksheet and their report illustrate how this school really embraced this project.



my voice - what I think -  
what is important to me?





bán.



Tá cabhair uaim.

English → me, "my voice"  
rish. → me, God.  
Maths: decision makers.  
Others

Family - Church. priest.  
School. Education  
Friends Teachers.  
Community - gardai, neighbours  
Co. Council - government  
Emper development group.

Water feature  
Fountain.  
Air hostess.  
Dreams: Drummer, plumber, painter, window cleaner  
Archaeologist, playground, shop, bus, Journalist, Native walks, Sales pe  
Canal, Cycle track, Swimming pool, alternative - Solo panels  
Bus driver, taxi's, electric lorry, (powerpoint) - energy  
Politician, Co. councillor  
Dream Jobs: Dorky, musician, factory worker, photographer.  
lego designer, Farmers, Soccer player, Cadet, Army, Cayak - boat ya  
Mechanic, Fish Farm, lorry driver, Builder, teacher, plasterer,  
Engineer, Harpist, Bouncer - Security. Butcher, dog breeder  
Crafts, gardening, detective, Vet, ice cream maker  
doctor nurse  
Painting, Baking, Country market, post office, Surgeon,  
Firefighter, gardai. Artist, Paramedic,  
Chef, UFC Fighter Fishmonger, ambulance driver.  
Barber. pilot, circus.  
(airfield).

Turlough

hobbies  
- Sport - rugby  
- Farming  
- Fishing  
- Soccer. Shoot  
- GAA. Musc  
- Swimming, Arc  
- rounders,  
- hurling.

Seán  
087  
566  
25th Apr  
Time (10)

## "My Voice"

Name: Conor Lynn Age: 10 years old

My Dreams For The Future:

Family :

1. For my family to be well and healthy.
2. To Succeed in their chosen career.
3. To be honest decent people.

Friends:

1. To be happy.
2. To be loyal.
3. To have fun.

Community:

1. To pray together.
2. To look after the elderly.
3. To enhance our environment.

Jobs:

1. More employment in our local area.
2. More prospects for children in the future.
3. Less emigration.

School :

1. To keep our school open.
2. To welcome all children.
3. To provide an atmosphere where we can learn and grow.

Skills in my area:

1. Farming.
2. Sport



3. gardening

Hobbies:

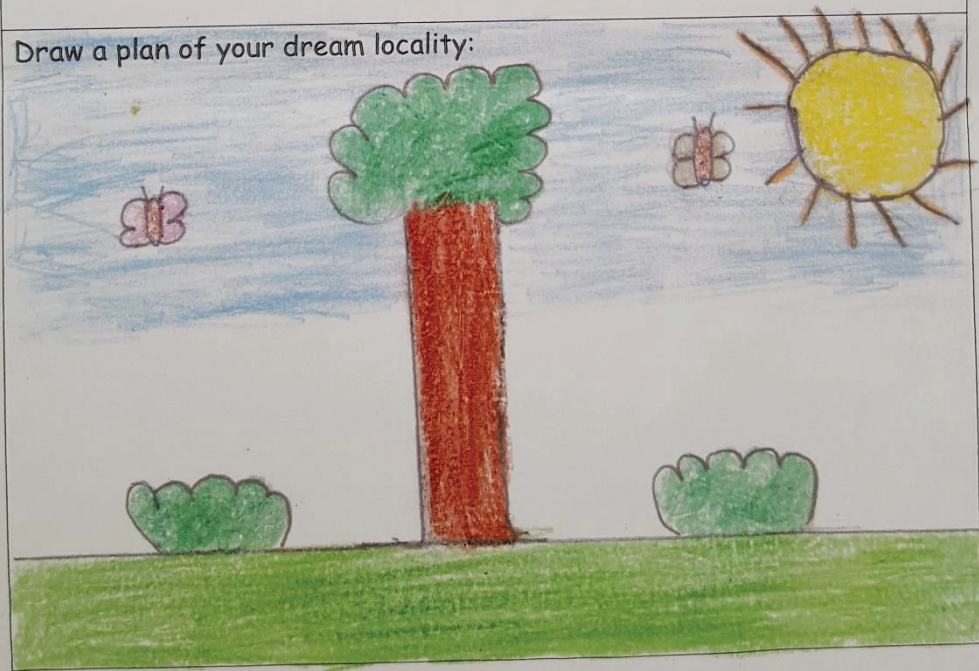
1. Football
2. soccer
3. Farming

The Environment:

1. No Litter
2. Recycle more
3. protect animals and nature.

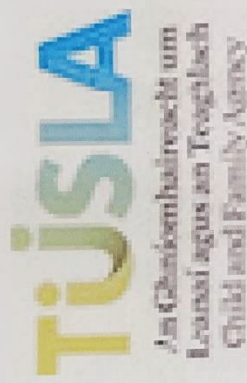
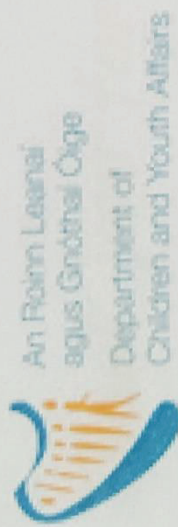
My dream job: G.A.A. Coach.

Draw a plan of your dream locality:









## Emper N.S. -Report Form-CYPSC March 2017



*Kim,*

*Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this very valuable "My/Our Voice" project. We have learned that CYPSC is Children and Young People's Services Committees. We understand that CYPSC has many agencies working together to improve the lives of children, young people and families in Ireland. We*

*appreciate your work with us and we now present our findings.*

*Emper NS is a very busy school and indeed the senior room is a particularly active and busy classroom. Every week we have some new learning initiative. For instance, last week we attended the "Eason's Spelling Bee" competition and hosted an "All Irish Mass". This week we participated in and came*



*runners-up in our section of the 5-a-side Spar Soccer competition. These are just 3 examples of all the extra curricular activities we do.*

*Our "Action Team Partnership Committee" work hard to research and do projects where our pupils, teachers and parents can work together to improve our school. It gives us a strong voice. So far we have developed 3 action plans and made many improvements to our school*

*environment and lives. Examples of some of the work and progress are; road safety art room, bicycle stands, rounders tournament, Maths trails.*

*During your second visit we discussed what is important to me/us. We listed our health, happiness, family, teachers/school, friends, community, country and the world.*



*We enjoy developing our hobbies; farming, fishing, swimming, piano playing, Gaelic football, rounders, soccer, karate, rugby, walking, cycling, clay shooting, music & art.*

*In Empor we have groups like Emper Community Development, Parents' Association, Board of Management, Gardaí, Country Markets, many good and supportive neighbours and St.*

*Matthew's Church. All these groups help us and support us in many different ways.*

*In our area we have many different local natural and built treasures; Emper Castle, Emper Caves, Emper Monument, The River Inny, The Royal Canal, The Bog, Emper Green. Recently there was an article on about 300 "Whooper Swans" that visit our locality each year. They come from Iceland or*



*Greenland every year. Derek Mooney (from RTE) aired a programme on these rare creatues.*

*We then discussed our "Dream Jobs". They*  
*Our Dreams: We would like to see a new playground, cycle track, outdoor gym and more environmental opportunities (nature walks and trails) in Emper. It would be great to have a swimming pool. In the future we would like to*

*have "solar powered" cars and trucks, electric lorries and alternative energy supplies in our houses.*

*We then discussed our "Dream Jobs". They included; lego designers, farmers, soccer players, drummers, plumbers, painters, window cleaners, archaeologists, cadet, army and marine personnel, taxi drivers, musicians, factory workers, photographers, mechanics,*



*boatyard workers, engineers, computer workers, harpists, bouncers, butchers, dogbreeders, doctors, nurses, surgeons, paramedics, pilots, airfield workers, gardeners, detectives, vets, icecream makers, painters, bakers, country market organisers, postoffice workers, firefighters, chefs, fishmongers.*

*We used out thoughts and ideas to create "My/Our Voice" visual displays (board & the diorama).*

*Once again, thank you for working with us and we hope our work provides the "powers that be" with some information about our thoughts and ideas for the future! We enjoyed providing you with a "window to our lives" and a "vision for our future". Go raibh míle maith agat!*

*The Senior Room Pupils*



Dream job fashion designer.



Farming diorama.



There were two sessions in Clonbrusk in March 2017, this is a unique setting in that it is a new purpose built facility next to the Primary Care centre in Clonbrusk, Athlone. There is a community garden/allotment type plot in front of the school. The room leader Marese arranges visits from the gardener, an opportunity for the children to look at the vegetables and experience. This group also have speech and drama on a weekly basis. Some of the parents also have public sector jobs within the community for example postman and fire services. This came through in the work. They displayed an awareness of these services in their chat. There was also talk of the fire truck and having a visit from the fire brigade.



Below is a list of the comments made by the children to describe their piece in both sessions. Marese and her team, Maggie, Janina and Liz assisted me in recording the comments on the back of each sheet. One interesting result in this setting was where a boy stood his figure's hope to make a 3d piece, this was very creative and displayed his ability to envision his world. He displayed imagination with his description saying he was going for a walk outside, he also mentioned a baby kangaroo. You will see from the descriptions below that the children describe scenes from their everyday life, their circle of influence evident in their words. Also the second session depicts the places buildings and sense of place they experience. It is interesting in this setting that benefits from drama that a "laughing house" or theatre should appear. Also interesting is the great imagination here, dreams of the future also appear with the mention of owning a boutique by one young girl, she describes a magic door into the boutique.





Sample of recorded statements on children's work from Clonbrusk Community Childcare,

- Unique setting (benefiting from music, speech and drama.) One boy stood his people upright moving from 2d to 3d. Was outside in sunshine going for a walk, baby kangaroo.
- Mum dad sister grandad granny and dog. Outside walking to school.
- Mum dad 2 brothers 1 sister, chose black background.
- Family 4 people (all coloured same pattern)
- Mam dad brother me two dogs. (My family and me in my house)
- Me my sister, mam dad teacher Maggie teacher Janina
- Mam dad me my brother, it is outside. "we are looking in the oven there's mince pies in the oven, mam and dad made it! All the family are in the kitchen. My dogs are outside in the back garden.
- Mam dad brother me, "I am at home in the sitting room with my family"
- All my friends.
- Me my sister mammy daddy we're inside looking out of house. It is a look out house. There's a telescope. A speedboat outside, see the stair. (granny lives near Hodson Bay)
- My house , my garage, my bicycle, zombies
- Me mam dad 2 brothers
- Me, mam dad, grandad granny auntie Jackie my brother my sister, I'm upstairs playing with Sophie'.
- My family are outside walking in the sun. I am playing tags.
- Mammy me nanny sister grandad and brother.
- My family
- Me, mammy, nanny, Logan, grandad.

Feedback based on buildings:

- Fish house, looking at the fish swim around (aquarium)
- Going to the playground, daddy used a map to find the playground
- There's an ice house at the playground.

- Jump for Joy, there's slides, there's scary places, place to play, go there for birthdays.
- Athlone castle.
- Jump for joy, slides, balls, games.
- It's a rainbow, fire truck, fire station, Daddy.
- Doors, Guards, it's the garda station.
- Boutique, little girls wearing a dress, magic door, dresses, it's a magic handbag and there's place to pay.
- Spiderman shop in the square.
- Peters school, desks, chair the children.
- Police station, spooky house, guards, monsters inside.
- Fire station.
- A Laughing house, tells jokes and makes people happy. (theatre)
- Police station and fire station.
- Post office and postman.
- Aquarium with turtles in it.
- My house, bathroom, door, flying jet house, my washing machine, my kitchen is inside. This is the TV toy house with lots of toys.



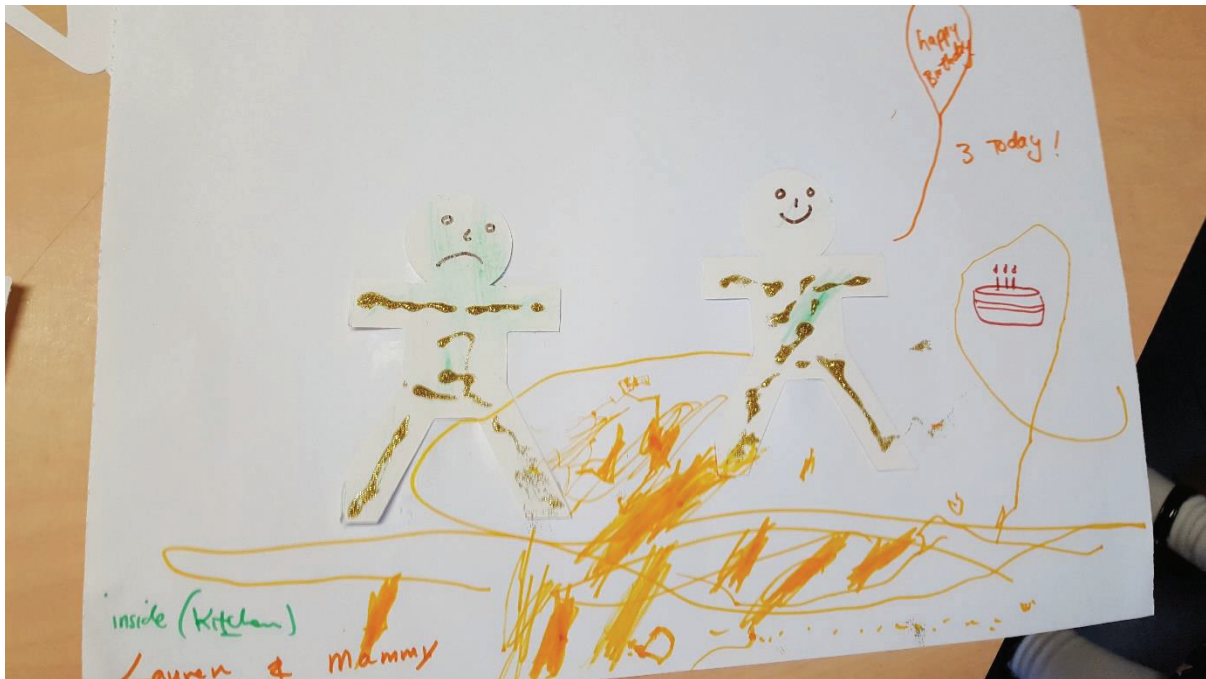
Community buildings present and future by clonbrusk childcare ages 3 years.

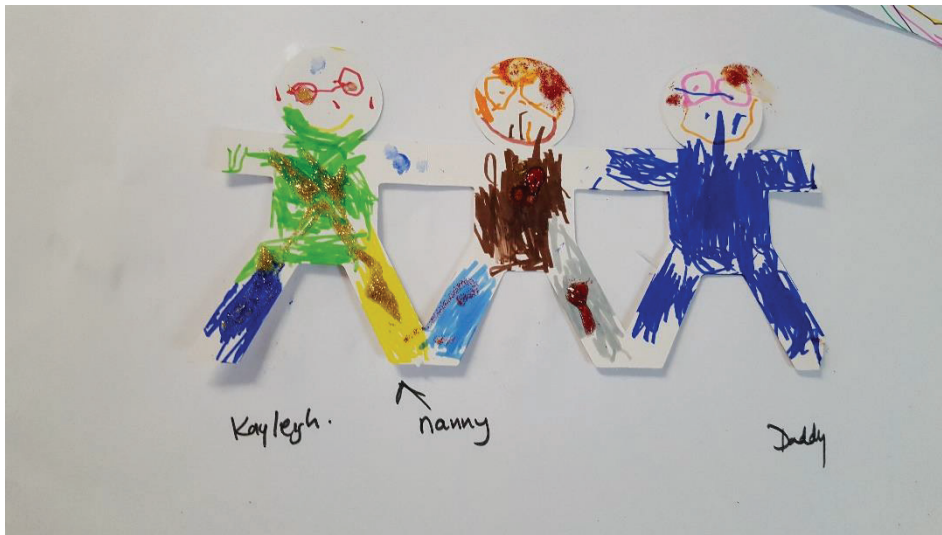
## Stepping Stones, Rathowen,

Some settings had results that were unique to them or their area, one clear finding in Stepping Stones Rathowen was the importance of grandparents and their support. A number of children drew their grandmother first, one child made themselves and their grandmother. It was apparent and confirmed by the staff here that many grandparents care for the children while parents are at work while many homes had more than one generation in the home. This was the case in the other childcare settings however, the visual results and comments by the children stood out in stepping stones. It was also one child's birthday in this setting while the facilitator was there, she had dressed up in a princess outfit and also drew her outfit and asked for assistance to put in her candles, balloon and age. She wanted to depict the party; the balloons that had been bought. This celebration of the children's age was of clear importance to her. Attention to this in the setting, singing happy birthday also helped to demonstrate to this girl her value in the world.

Both outdoors and indoors also feature in the pieces of art, a lot of the children located themselves indoor with family member watching TV, having dinner or some other aspect of their day. Outdoor scenes generally showed some aspect of play or imagination. One of the following pictures shows the figures under a rainbow. Younger brothers and sisters are also very important especially if the children are new babies. There are some babies included in the pictures from Rathowen. This is a big adjustment for a child.

Girl in her dress for her birthday.

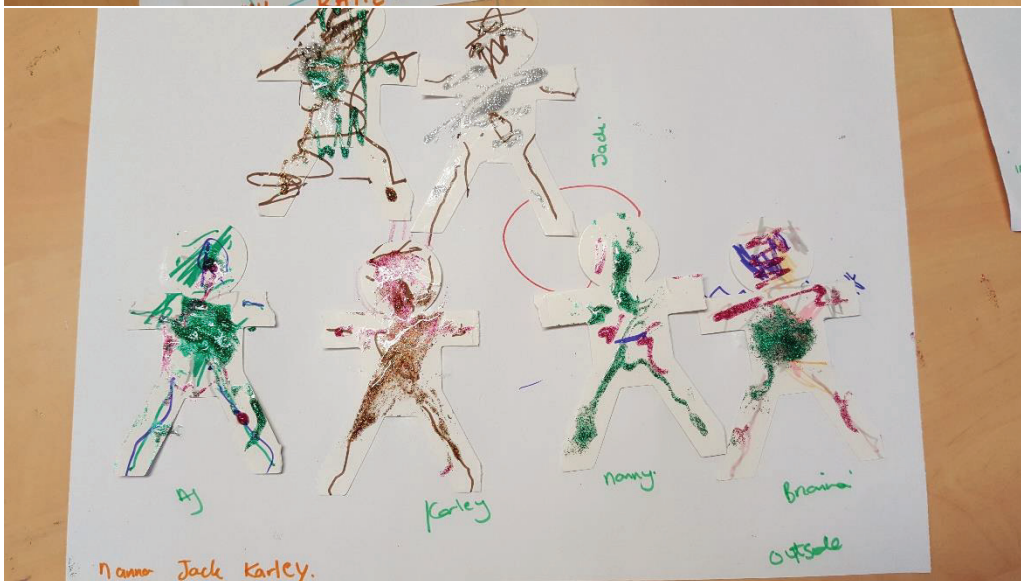
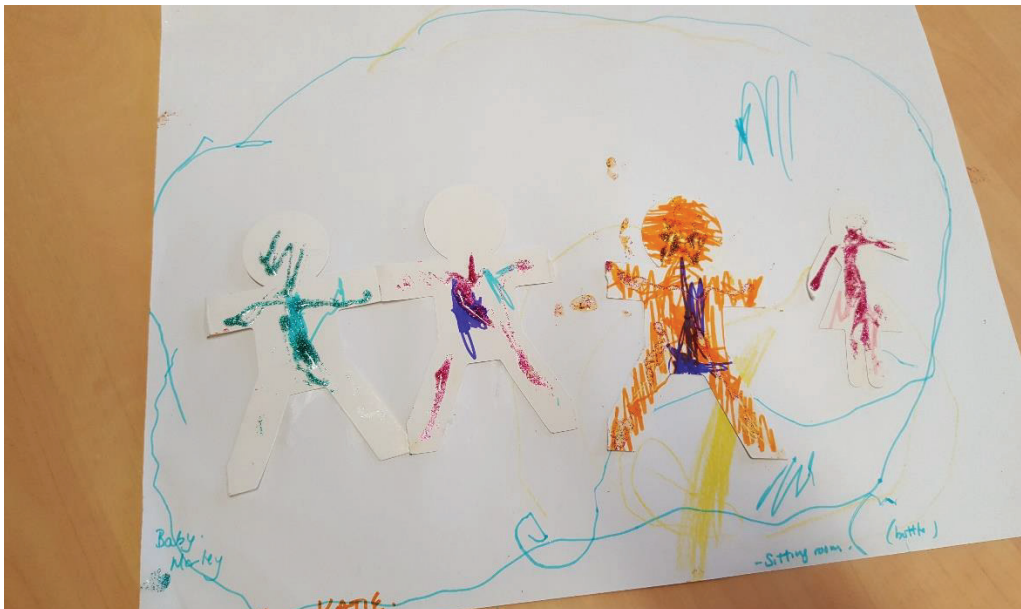




Playing outside

The following picture illustrates the new baby to this family, the baby is named and an important part of the day, feeding the baby, the bottle is also described.





This is the inside of the house in the centre, sitting watching tv, another side (left) shows this girl in bed and further left outside with her pet. She depicts different aspects of her day and life. (she asked for some help with some parts of the picture however majority of piece she executed herself.

Facilitator worked with two rooms in Springlawn community childcare. Both sessions took place one week apart in January and were the first childcare group to experience the project. Here the circle of influence was again evident; me, my family, friends, school, community. The children talked a lot about their family. There are some large families here and it was important for the children to illustrate all their siblings. Cousins were also of significance as one boy preferred to depict his two male cousins as he plays with them whereas his sister might be indoors doing something else. The train also passes the creche where it is located. Perhaps this maybe why the children were more aware of travel or communicative about it. They waved to the train as it passed by. Travel is a significant part of the day, one boy illustrated his trip to the facility and his brothers and sisters in the car so the school run was a memorable part of the day.

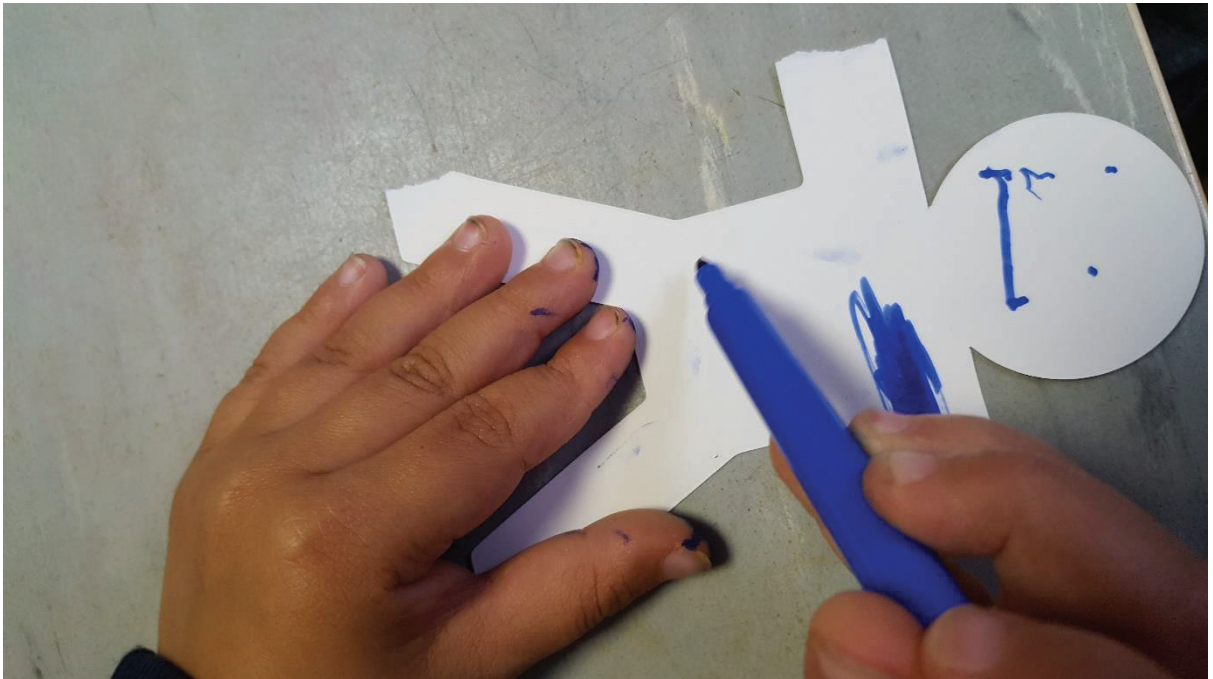
There was also one boy who had been bereaved losing his mother a number of months beforehand. He has brothers and sisters but he initially made just himself and his dad. He used just the colour blue. He was very demonstrative and eager to take part in the activity. All the children were very enthusiastic. One boy also like a lot of colour, he wanted to use 5 to 6 markers at the same time! Here the children were aware of the community, perhaps one of the more urban settings also, they knew about the post office, the post man, sending their letters to Santa in December and they also listed places like the library. When making their buildings they focused on their homes.





This young child had a preference for art and was extremely tidy and careful with lines, his class leaders drew the facial expressions but he coloured the bodies. The children here listed playing outside, using swings and slides, playing football and different games, watching television, playing computer games with older brothers and sisters among the things they do.

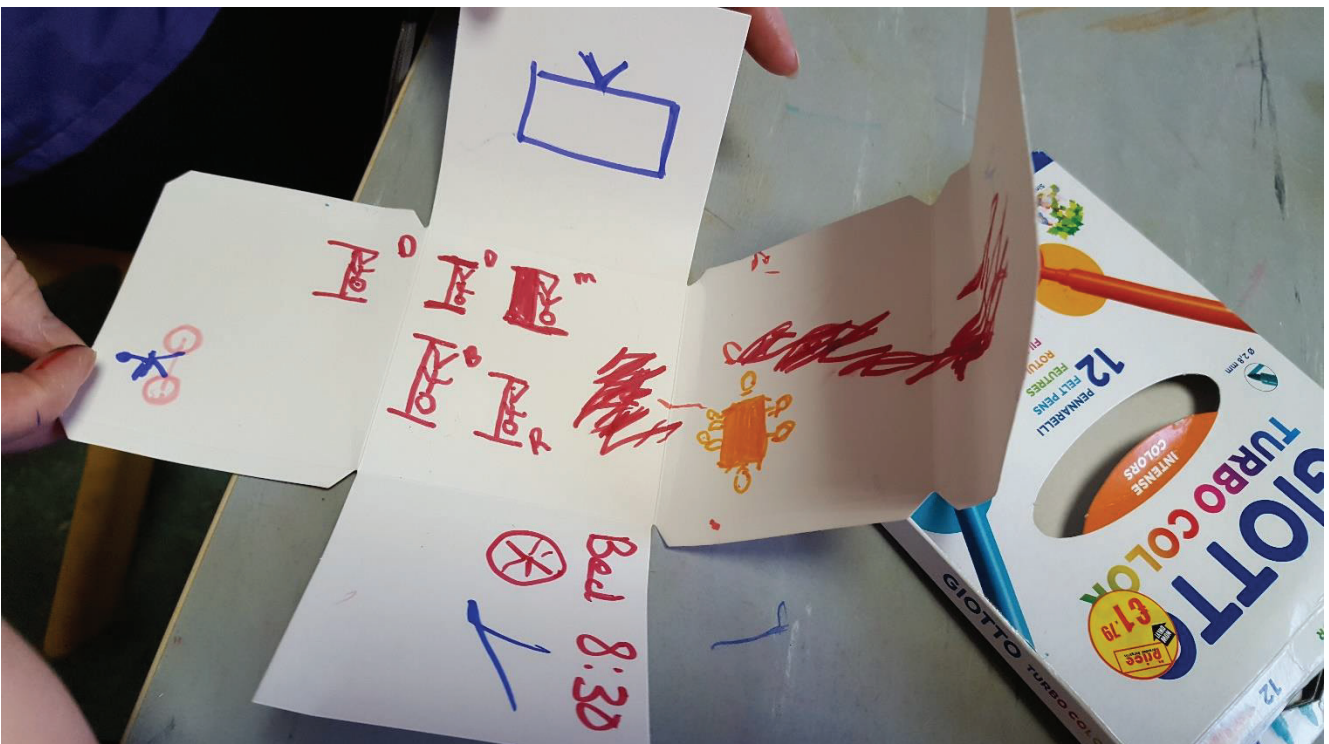








Below the significant time of day is recorded (with some help from leader) bedtime at 8.30am. Also out cycling with father as hobby, the family are also listed in their beds. The meal times are important as the family is shown on the right at their table and this part was drawn independently by this child.



The children in whizzkids were the most recent participants of the project having both their sessions after Easter. The time of year means children are more likely to have a greater vocabulary than earlier in the year. The children were very enthusiastic and communicative. The children again illustrated themselves and their families. They had recently made a family tree in their room so this may also have assisted. It was interesting here that some wishes were also included in the family pictures, one little boy included a baby brother which was imaginary. Facilitator would not have known this was a wish only Alice of Whizzkids noticed this detail. The children talked about what they enjoyed, they talked a lot about the Zip line. It turned out that it had just been replaced. The zipline and playground is only a few yards away from the facility and obviously has a great impact on the children as they talked about being outside and games they played. They mentioned the trampoline, zipline, skipping, climbing trees, soccer. When asked what they would like in their community they said to have a beach or cinema closeby. The children were also aware of different jobs. Without any encouragement the children were in their free play hour when facilitator arrived on the first day. One little boy came to facilitator with stethoscope and checked her heart saying "I am a doctor". This shows also that the dress up props assist children in understanding roles. The doctor was mentioned in week two also and an injection needle produced. Visits to the doctor are experiences the children have and act out. These services, the fire station and doctors were made more than once when making community buildings in session two. There were plans underway for a visit from the fire brigade so it is also possible this influenced the number of fire stations.



The children also integrated both their own experience of where they live, their local community and their dreams. This was evident in role play but also where they depicted themselves as firemen or doctors like the example above. The children also enjoyed the opportunity to discuss what they had made and have it heard and understood.





Here the children have made farms, nurses, doctors, their homes, the outdoors presenting us with their world.

The following diorama shows one young girls world as she loves horses and has her own, she displays her family, the farm and her beloved horse. She also shows attention to detail depicting a necklace as well as using the facial expression pictures alongside her family.





The Children depict their experiences and allow us into their world



This is a building from Springlawn centering on the kitchen, also showing the stairs, a lot of children included the stairs and details from the home. This child got help from leader on kitchen table but the upstairs is completely drawn by the child.



Overall analysis of all sessions and Conclusions:

### **Circle of influence**

The children clearly illustrate their circle of influence. They are aware of themselves as individuals. They understand themselves in relation to their family, friends, school, community, country, wider society and the world. They depict what they experience through what they share and what they draw or make. Their ability to express and communicate their experience verbally increases through good attachment, support from family this circle of influence, the school, community and how they see themselves fitting into their world. This is more notable and there is more available verbal evidence recorded by the older children.

Commentary on each outcome

### **Active and healthy with physical and mental well-being.**

Children detail the sports and physical activity they are interested in and enjoy. They share the football, basketball and number of sports they are involved in. Playgrounds are listed in every setting as being important. For example where the zipline had been fixed this was mentioned several times. Outdoor activities like skipping, trampoline, gardening, outdoor games and the opportunity for these was expressed in every setting. Emper N.S. were very interested in nature and detailed this in their report, they also listed their dreams for development in the area. The children also learn and play music. The children in lus na greine are also aware of the Harp festival in Granard and many were also very interested in music. They illustrated their interest in the pictures more than discussed them verbally which was interesting.

### **Achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development.**

Children benefit from the opportunities across all settings and those unique to their setting. Each have opportunity to learn what is provided on their curriculum. Many have outside opportunity like the those who enjoy speech, language and drama as well as gardening. Evidence of awareness of the theatre in this preschool was notable. Emper N.S. deliver the curriculum but also many opportunities for the children to engage in their community and further in wider society as they participate in special interests projects there. They display a great ability to communicate on topics like politics the environment and have a solution focused and project led style of engagement. They enter competitions based on science, spelling as well as sports and physical activity they are interested in and enjoy. They have a keen interest in the environment and are participating in green schools, their future plans for the community (ant hotel, bee keeping, green cars, emper castle) are all very environmentally friendly. The children here also have a great sense of the economy, opportunity, what their future careers might be. They also discussed jobs indigenous to Emper and those beyond.

### **Safe and protected from harm**

The children's understanding and depiction of their circle of influence is a snapshot of how they see their home environment and environs. Their attachment figures within the family and possibly school settings are clearly illustrated and the need for strong bonds. It was clear for example the strong bond with grandmothers in Rathowen. It was also evident for children who are affectionate and demonstrative that they thrive in healthy relationships. These relationships exist primarily within the home but then extend further outward in their circle of influence. Their communities must be safe and provide safe spaces for the children to have their needs met.

## **Have economic security and opportunity**

The children have a clear sense of themselves, their families and community. They are aware of their caregivers and if their family members are working or have the opportunity for work. The children showed great ability to dream and also strong ability to break these dreams into manageable steps like study. The children in Emper N.S. display the strongest tangible evidence here as they list what is in their community, how it could be improved. Their list of jobs and roles already within the community show their ability to understand the assets this rural community has and their respect for the environment show their desire to protect it. They also have dreams to develop it further as a tourist destination as they mention (on the board). They list jobs they may need to outward into society perhaps to attain. The pre-school children and children from the youthclub also have strong dreams, they depict their dream jobs and their ideal world.

## **Connected, respected and contributing to their world.**

The children in Lus Na Greine Youthclub as well as Emper N.S. showed a great ability to respond to the questions posed by this project. It appeared that these children were used to being asked for their opinion or at least understood their ability to contribute. Once more; they see and express their understanding of themselves as individuals with a value. Then to understand themselves in relationship to those around them. The children in granard and surrounding community had a keen sense of all the services available within their community. The fire in a local public house was illustrated, they talked about the fire services, library, garda station and they also were very proud of their resource centre. The children in Emper N.S. were also very happy and confident in sharing their opinion, they also had a sense of the ability to make a difference in the world especially in regard to the environment.

## **The children's recommendations:**

*The children all expressed their wishes for spaces to play.* Those who had good spaces shared this with enthusiasm, those who wanted more space also listed the desire for space.

*Opportunity for entertainment.* Some children said they'd like the beach or cinema close to them. They also listed play centres they had visited. Some had visited services like the fire station library and similar.

*Nature and animals.* They talked about the zoo and also asked for "bring in your pet" day. Those who had visited the theatre depicted it.

*Opportunities for expression* One young girl announced her win on the second session of the Texaco competition. She clearly enjoyed the opportunity for artmaking. They also mentioned the outdoors and environment and more opportunity to be outdoors. One young girl said she would like to have the choice on whether she goes to school or not.

*Love of sport and outdoors:* Many of the children play and enjoy sports and being outdoors.

*Care for the environment:* The children respect and have a clear wish to maintain their environment

## **Conclusion:**

*Further opportunity for children's voice to be heard perhaps in many different ways:*

The children welcomed the opportunity to give and express their opinions. Those who had previously been given the opportunity or perhaps have this as a habitual activity found it easier to share their opinions and to share and communicate. Those benefitting from debating, speech and drama were more experienced in sharing.

*Environment based work:* the children clearly have a respect for nature and their environment, this could be given further exploration.

*Time of year:* Children in the second half of the academic year have had the first part of the year to settle into their setting and grow into themselves somewhat. Children for example who took part in their setting in January may have a different response in May following their growth since January.

Thank you:

Thank you to all the participating settings,

Lus Na Greine FRC Youth club, Granard

Springlawn Community Creche , Longford

Stepping stones Community Creche, Rathowen,

Clonbrusk Community Creche, Athlone,

Whizzkids Community Creche, Drumlish

Emper N.S. Ballynacarrigy,

Thank you:

Eileen Finan Lus Na Greine FRC ,

Maria Quinn Ballynacarrigy FRC,

Eimear Carron Longford County Childcare.



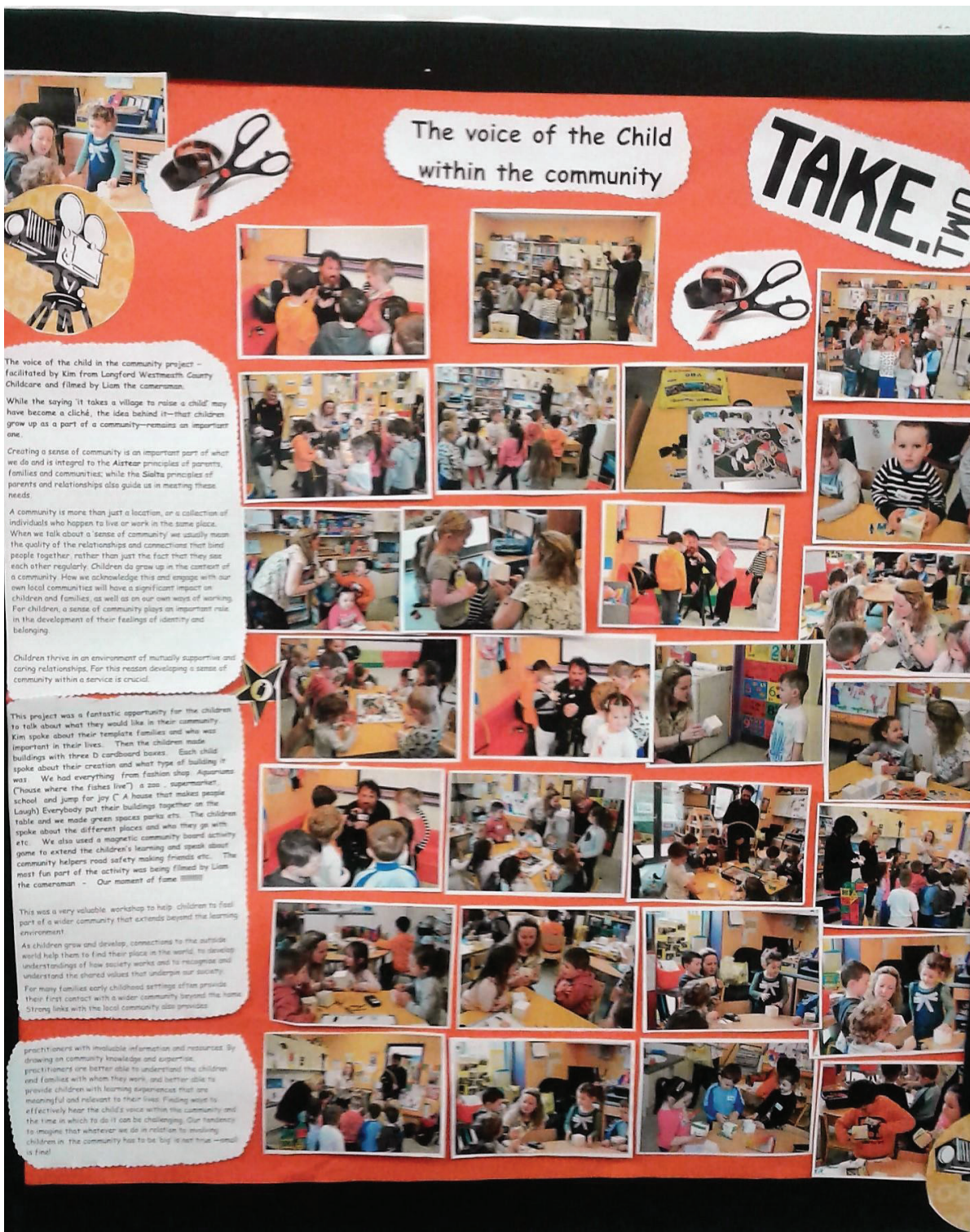




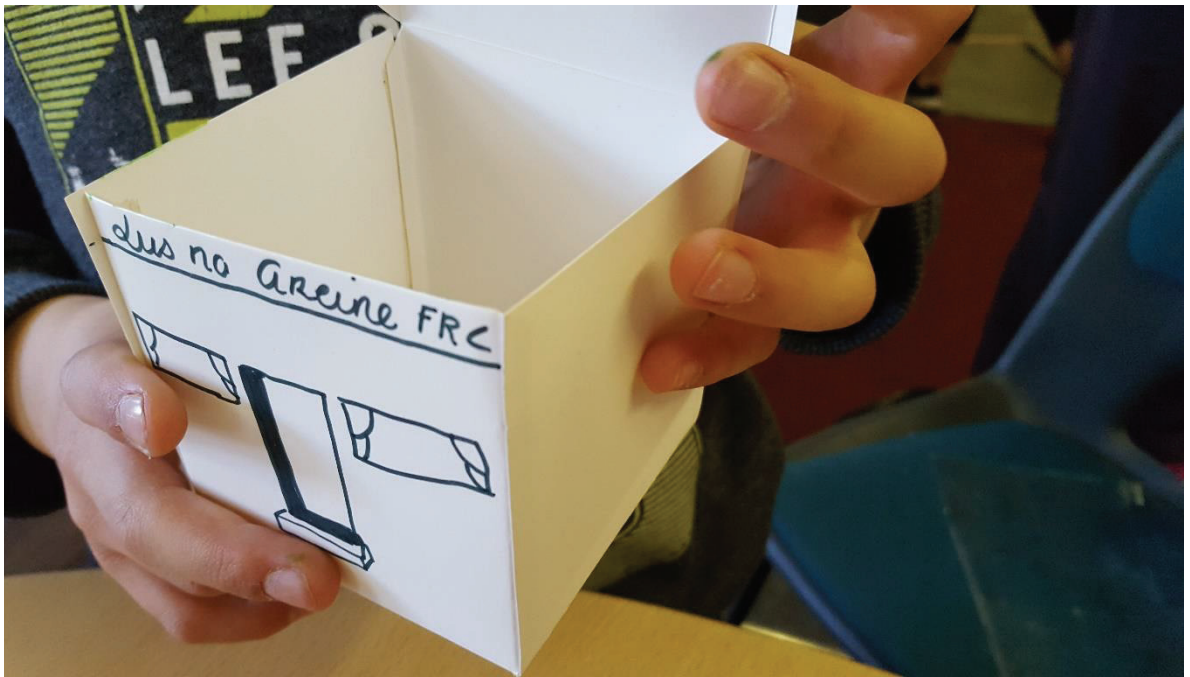














## Appendix 2

### Longford Comhairle na nÓg Consultation Report

### **Young People's Agenda Day – CYPSC Longford**

**Date:** Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

**Time:** 10:30am-3:10pm / 6pm-8pm.

**Venue:** Longford Arms Hotel, Main Street, Longford Town, Co. Longford

**Participant details:** 68 young people aged between 12 and 24 years from a variety of different youth services, secondary schools, family resource centres and secondary schools.

Workshops were delivered using the World Café method. Staff did not take part in the facilitation of the workshops but were on site for child protection and safety reasons. Longford Comhairle na nÓg were the key consultants in the organisation of the day, and planned the event to ensure the best approaches were in place to assure youth participation and a youth friendly environment. The day began with an introduction to CYPSC and the agenda for the day. Grainne Reid, CYPSC Coordinator spoke to participants about the role of CYPSC and why this Agenda Day was being held. Following this, young people were split in to groups and took part in icebreaker games for 45 minutes. Subsequently workshops began with a lunch break in between.

Key points that were discussed in the workshops were;

- The vacant shopping centre
- Respect and Equality (amongst adults/teenagers and different cultures/ethnicities)
- Rural Services and lack of transport in rural areas
- The need for the further development of urban services.

Facilitators agreed that the above points were mentioned in some capacity in each workshop. Facilitators also agreed that it is important to keep participants informed of developments in the plan through either social media, written correspondence or through informing the schools/organisations.

### **Identified priorities for young people under the 5 national outcomes:**

#### **Outcome 1: Children and Young people are active and healthy with physical and mental wellbeing**

- Opening of a skate park
- Mental health services for young people in Co. Longford
- Further development of youth services
- Development of recreational facilities in rural areas and the Mall Complex
- Service representatives visit rural areas if services cannot directly be ran in the area
- Better education in schools regarding diet, nutrition and mental health services.
- Specific activities for babies and toddlers

#### **Outcome 2: Children and Young people are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development**

- More emphasis on and improved guidance counselling
- Life skills incorporated in to the curriculum.
- Revamp of the leaving cert system – young people feel the point system isn't fair
- Young people allowed to be more self-expressive (makeup, piercings, uniforms)
- Local businesses to offer more opportunities for work experience or trainee positions
- Increased understanding for all young people on youth reach.
- More choice in the curriculum, especially in same sex schools.
- Support and incentives for further education after leaving certificate

#### **Outcome 3: Children and Young People are safe and protected from harm.**

- An Garda Síochána was the main discussion for young people – the need to be armed, fitter, given more authority, and more present on the street.
- Increase in response time and accessibility of emergency services
- More CCTV Camera's and better lighting on streets.
- Introduction of an effective Community Watch programme.

#### **Outcome 4: Children and Young People have economic security and opportunity.**

- The development of the vacant shopping centre in Longford Town
- Emphasis on local businesses – support from government, people shopping locally
- Support and incentives for further education after leaving certificate
- Raise of minimum wage
- More practical skills in schools that are transferable to careers

#### **Outcome 5: Children and Young People are connected, respected and contributing to their world**

- More information on services
- Increased awareness of young people's rights.
- Education and awareness of different cultures – integration
- More communication (between services, organisations, councils, government)



## **Appendix:**

### **Outcome 1: Children and Young people are active and healthy with physical and mental wellbeing**

#### **Explain more about the topic:**

- More activities needed and lack of facilities
- Not enough discussion around depression
- Mental health services (Samaritans, Good2Talk, ChildLine, The Attic House)
- Differentiating between good and bad mental health
- Sports and Youth services
- Mental health is what you think, your outlook on life and how you feel
- Both health's are linked – exercise clears head
- Being happy and confident
- Social aspect of sport
- Mental health is totally disregarded until it gets bad

#### **What needs to change?**

- More facilities for teens
- More mental health services for young people
- Services advertised
- Facilities accessible and secure
- More mental health clinics
- More services in rural areas
- More activities for smaller kids
- Promotion and variety in sports
- Skate park
- Rural facilities needed in big parishes
- More gyms
- Waterpark and Trampoline Park
- Less fast food stores
- Young people allowed to leave school and go up town for lunch (healthier choices)

## **Outcome 2: Children and Young people are achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development**

### **Explain more about the topic:**

- CSPE and SPHE to be taken more serious
- Continuous assessment instead of exams
- Varying teacher methods (one way doesn't suit everyone)
- Better computers
- Extra help should be free
- Too much of a memory test
- Practical subjects aren't seen as academic
- Less emphasis on referencing
- Heating and fix leaks
- More subject choice
- If one subject failed in leaving certificate you should only have to repeat that subject
- Happier school environment
- First Aid should be taught in schools.
- More variety of sports
- Clean bathrooms
- Not all money spent on sports – promotion of arts and music
- More outdoor facilities in urban schools
- Rest Areas
- Shorter Classes and Bigger lockers
- Should be allowed take a drink in class

### **What needs to change?**

- Broader subject choice
- Better guidance counselling
- Less stringent uniform rules
- Less note taking
- More feedback from teachers on how to improve academically
- More use of technology
- Consistent teachers (not always changing)
- Shorter courses and school days
- Remove the points system
- Better data protection
- Less note taking
- Mainstreams schools should be more like youth reach
- Shouldn't have to stand for teachers
- Should be able to go to the toilet when you want

### **Outcome 3: Children and Young People are safe and protected from harm.**

#### **Explain more about the topic:**

- Scared to go down alley ways
- As an 18-24 year old scared to go out alone at night
- Feel safer in the country at night time
- Cyberbullying
- Paedophilia
- Mugging
- Stabbing
- Lack of sense of safety at night
- Lack of guards on the beat
- Guards enjoy power
- Rapists
- Clowns
- Drugs
- Racism
- Not harsh enough punishments

\*One person said they felt safe in the community

\*One person said they felt LGBT was accepted in the community

#### **What needs to change?**

- Guards need to be armed and on the street more
- Guards need to be in rural areas – more stations
- Needs to be a decrease in assaults
- More punishments for law breakers
- Better garda education
- More bullying and racism hotlines
- Teachers need to be more proactive in preventing bullying
- Services like attic are helpful regarding bullying
- Presence of “Junkies” on streets
- More traffic lights
- More rehab facilities
- Family and friends can help make people feel safe.



## **Outcome 4: Children and Young People have economic security and opportunity**

### **Explain more about the topic:**

- Finish new shopping centre
- Businesses in Longford not hiring
- Little opportunity for grants or jobs
- No opportunity to live independently due to lack of employment
- No Jobs
- New chain stores
- Young people should pay less tax
- Funding for developing businesses or setting up businesses
- No assistance from government
- Underfunded services
- Lot of unemployment
- Lack of trust/negative attitudes towards teenagers

### **What needs to change?**

- Open new shopping centre
- Less online shopping
- Adults listen to teens
- Raise minimum wage
- Equality for teens (between adults and education history)
- More support or teens past education
- More opportunity for work experience
- Do something productive with unfinished estates
- Adapt more positive relationships with teens
- Work experience part of leaving cert curriculum not just TY

**Outcome 5: Children and Young People are connected, respected and contributing to their world**

**Explain more about the topic:**

- Different types of people and cultures
- Mixing with people
- Contribution means sharing information with other people
- Not always yourself depending on who's around
- Friends/ People/ Volunteers / Contribution/ Having your voice heard / Social Media
- Talking/ Respect / All generations / Foróige / Classmates/ Behaviour / Religions/Race
- Judged on family / clothes / speech
- Different cultures don't mix
- Stereotyping/Ethnic Background / Judging on appearance
- Respecting others opinions & treat people equally
- Public Transport/Rural Transport
- Teens not respected as much as adults
- No integration

**What needs to change?**

- Student Council
- More support in schools
- Link in rural towns
- More open integration
- More access to transport/taxi's
- Stop unfair treatment
- Get involved in community
- More education on rights and services
- Respect the law and environment
- Culture days
- Stop stereotypical views on ethnicities
- Equality among family, ethnic, religious background
- No personal views in jobs.













## Appendix 3

### Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg Consultation Report



Young People's Consultation 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

Time: 6pm

Venue: Annebrooke Hotel Mullingar

Participant details: 43 young people representing 9 secondary schools, 6 youth projects, 2 sporting organisations and a range of urban and rural backgrounds and young people with varying degrees of abilities and disabilities.

Identified priorities for young people under the 5 national outcomes: (in order of importance)

Achieving:

- More access to mental health classes
- Create an awareness that academic achievement is NOT the only form of achievement
- Training for teachers to help and understand young people with mild disabilities
- Talks for colleges and back doors into college
- Awareness/opportunities for young people to volunteer

Active and healthy:

- Learning how to cook healthy food
- Gym membership discounts for secondary schools
- PE and activities need to accommodate non-sporty people
- Community fitness courses in parks
- Healthier food in supermarkets

Economic Security:

- Student estates near colleges with cheaper prices
- Better Child benefits ( this is regarding the child benefit payment)
- Learn about being able to borrow money and repaying
- Work experience outside of school
- Cookery classes (when asked young people mentioned how to cook and live on a budget)

Connected and respected:

- Community events
- Education on what is good/bad about social media (too much negativity about social media)
- Youth representatives (on relevant groups/committees)
- More intergenerational events
- Need to connect with older generation

The evaluations for this piece of work were hugely positive. Young people said they were happy with the opportunity to get their voices heard, and the methodologies for how this took place.

Young people also wanted to add to CYPSC that they feel it is important that they get some feedback from the CYPSC or have the opportunity to view the final report/plan when it is completed. This can be done through social media, or the groups/clubs/school they attend.

Staff commented on the number of times that transport (lack of) and facilities for young people (lack of) was something they were hearing time and time again from the table as the young people worked.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Investing in Children Membership Award Evaluation Report**



## Investing in Children Membership Award™ Evaluation



### TUSLA

#### Longford Westmeath Children & Young People's Services Committee

For the purpose of this evaluation report I met Niamh, Jack, Liam, Eimear, Charlotte, Tibia, Niamly, Tanmie, Pedar, Odam, Alex, Gabrielle, Thomas, Olivia, Paddy, Alison, Nikitina, Fergal, Bryna, Nirmh, Caoilfhinn, Aoife, Annya, Dearbh, Shanna, Abigail, Kirsty, Deobhra, Rosemary and Corinna at Lus na Greine Child and Family Resource Centre in Granard, County Longford on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (LW CYPSC) is a statutory body of the Irish Government which consists of representatives of all local agencies and organisations working collectively and constructively, to promote the best interests of children and young people in Longford and Westmeath.



The committee co-ordinates work from all of the agencies and individuals, taking its focus from the five National Outcomes for children and young people, as set out in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020.

The LW CYPSC accomplishes this by working closely with all key agencies to explore practice and outcomes. Furthermore the committee has made changes to its engagement methods to increase and promote the rights of children and young people in their work and that of its partners.

Following attendance at initial training events last year, innovatively the committee decided they wanted children and young people to set targets and goals the committee could work to and be accountable for through the development of Longford and Westmeath Children and Young People's Plan.

Children and young people would have the authority, for the first time, with the support of a Children and Youth Participation Sub-Committee, to create a plan to inform a strategic plan for other projects and services that children and young people use.

This report will highlight the ways in which the LW CYPSC involved these and other children and young people in decision making and identify any changes that have taken place.

## Opportunities for Dialogue and Change

### TUSLA Seed Funding

The Children and Youth Participation Sub-Committee applied to TUSLA for Seed Funding to increase the involvement of children and young people in its planning.

They were successful and received funding to support a very dynamic and inclusive engagement exercise that promoted the involvement of over 400 children and young people, supported by partner agencies. The engagement was to begin discussions with the committee about establishing a children and young people's plan which would be driven by the children and young people's agenda.

Jack described why this was important: ***"They need to know what we think about things."***

Caolilfhinn described Children and Young People's Services Committee as: ***"They help young people and families learn about their life and situation."***

Adam expressed: ***"It is important to see changes in things like recourse for mental health in schools."***

Once committee partners, children and young people further discussed the role of the committee some children and young people were given the option to come up with ideas. They planned dialogue engagement sessions which promoted children and young people's rights and used their ideas to establish the plan.

### Art Based Engagement

Some younger children suggested an effective approach to engage younger children in decision making would be through art, drawings and conversation with adults.

Nirmh told me: ***"I talk about the toy shops and what we want for places to go."***

Shanna added: ***"I drew my cousins and my family and friends and said why this was important."***

Amy also explained: ***"It's about children being heard and that they feel they can talk."***

Dearbh expressed: ***"It was just about trying to make things better."***



The information has now been collated and will form the basis of the plan and will be shared with the children and any involved community projects, who will then be given the option to discuss things further.

Several community sessions were then organised by the committee across County Longford and Westmeath, allowing many children the opportunity to express their dreams, hopes and aspirations at the request of the committee, through art and conversation.



### The National Outcomes

The overall purpose of the committee is to improve outcomes for children and young people through local and national interagency working practice. Directed by following five national outcomes:

- 1) Active and Healthy
- 2) Achieving in Learning and Development
- 3) Safe and Protected from Harm
- 4) Economic Security
- 5) Connected, Respected and Contributing

The LW CYPSC want to increase young people's understanding of these indicators and to find out what was important to young people in those terms. The committee allowed young people and partners to come up with an approach to achieve this. Some young people decided the best approach would be for them to discuss the outcomes with their peers and then advocate what is important about each one to the committee. Several peer led sessions were then organised.

Gabby facilitated a group on 'Economic Security', she explained:

***"It's important this information should be presented in child friendly terms and we found that there should be more summer jobs available as it is difficult for***



**18 -25 year olds to get work as there are not enough jobs in the town, and 16 year olds who do have jobs are paid below the minimum wage.”**

A Young Person facilitated the group on ‘Safe and Protected from Harm’ and explained:

**“Young People don’t feel safe and don’t think Garda are reliable or approachable, Garda are not visible on the streets.”**

This young person was also aware that this information will be fed back to the local Children and Young People Services Committee and will be set as an outcome for the committee to take forward on behalf of the children and young people.

Alison facilitated the group on ‘Connected, Respected and Contributing’, she explained:

**“Young people are still stereotyped and respect is often based on their background and young people also highlighted that those who live in rural areas are less connected.”**

Victoria added: **“We discussed things like the facilities in Longford being boring and developing them.”**

Alex mentioned: **“A variety of opinions were gathered from young people across the county.”**

The young people spoke about how they were able to act as peer facilitators and discuss the outcomes with lots of children and young people. They suggested children and young people could speak openly with other peers and felt supported by the committee and its partners to achieve this.

### World Café Style Day

Several young people came together to discuss ideas at the Greville Arms Hotel in Mullingar.

Annya explained: **“We wrote on sheets of flip chart paper what was good or bad about the living in the community.”**

Deobhra added: **“We also wrote what was missing from the community.”**

She also explained: **“We didn’t know at the time, why we were giving our opinion and for what particular reason.”** But that this was a good thing, as the young people then had a **“clear head”** and didn’t get **“bogged down.”**

The group also spoke about the importance of transport: **“That there is not enough to bring young people from rural areas into the towns.”** They said this information was brought to the County Council.

A member of the county council was at the event and heard their ideas, but took a 'back seat'.

The Longford Westmeath CYPSC have invited the young people to meet with them so as to present the key outcomes from their workshops in addition to the reports collated by the Child and Youth Participation Subgroup. Dialogue between the LW CYPSC and the children and young people is to remain open throughout the development of the Children and Young People's three year plan.

### Recommendations made by young people

Adam expressed: ***"It is important that young people get to see things change and the committee explains them."***

Lorna explained: ***"Young people think Mental Health Awareness and the lack of services for young people is really important and the committee could run a campaign to raise awareness."***

Some young people themselves explained how they have set up an 'Information Village' at an event recently and referenced Team Aware as a positive experience and a good way of reaching young people. These young people and others should be given the option to discuss these approach further with LW CYPSC representatives.

Gabrielle explained: ***"It worked really well with young people leading on the discussion about things as young people felt more comfortable talking to other young people and more could be done."***

Caoilfhinn: ***"The committed needs to have a better social media platform to share what is happening with ideas and to demonstrate other ways to get involved."***

Charlotte: ***"The committee needs to promote what is changing because of what things have been said."***

#### Children and Young People's Plan

***Make it accessible and available to children and young people.***

#### Increase Mental Health Campaigns

***Work with young people to develop mental health campaigns.***

#### Peer facilitation

***Continue to develop this further to promote children and young people's rights.***

#### CYPSC and Partners

***Evidence change based on the children and young people's strategies.***

#### CYPSC

***Increase presence on social media platforms to enhance children and young people's involvement in decision making outcomes.***

## Conclusion

Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Service Committee has taken some very big steps to make changes in how it engages with children and young people, to place the voices of children and young people centrally to the strategy of promoting better outcomes for the children and young people it represents.

This has been achieved through the development of a strong engagement plan which has been re-shaped by some children and young people. This has given many children and young people the opportunity, for the first time, to contribute to the decision making process of the committee by establishing an invigorated Children and Young People plan, designed mainly through the input of many children and young people across County Longford and Westmeath.

It is also very encouraging that the committee is willing to accept that young people have an increased role in deciding how to improve the committee's outcomes for children and young people. The committee has achieved this through the introduction of peer facilitators, who are helping to shape the committee's five national outcomes locally. If the facilitators are given additional support and guidance from the committee I see no reason why they can't influence local services to make further changes based on their necessary and important contribution in increasing the impact of the five national outcomes.

The committee should also discuss, with all representatives of the committee, and local children and young people's service providers further opportunities to provide additional information regarding what adjustments they will make which are a result of the plan. They should look at what feedback is made available and the different formats they can use, which are accessible to children and young people of all ages.

The reason for this is that some young people felt they would like to understand more about what the committee does and would like more follow up discussions once ideas had been introduced. They want more people to know about the committee and what they do to increase better outcomes for young people and feel this could be easily done within schools and through social media. All LW CYPSC representatives should consider applying for the Investing in Children Membership Award™ next year to demonstrate how they have applied the Children and Young People's Plan to their practice and how they have involved children and young people in the making decision process of their service.

All of the children and young people could discuss various aspects of their involvement in decision making processes to enhance the work of the committee, based on children and young people's ideas. The committee's new approach to improve how members engage with children and young people is beginning to take shape. Many children and young people felt valued when attending the dialogue engagement sessions and felt energised by the committee's commitment to involve them more. Their view is that



they do have the right to support better outcomes for children and young people across County Longford and Westmeath.

It is, therefore, for the above reasons that I would like to recommend that Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Service Committee receives the Investing in Children Membership Award™ and look forward to further developments next year.

***The following young people have endorsed that Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Service Committee should gain the Investing in Children Membership Award™. They are:***

***Alex, Gabrielle, Thomas, Olivia, Paddy, Alison, Nikitina, Fergal, Bryna, Nirmh, Caoilfhinn, Aoife, Annya, Dearbh, Shanna, Abigail, Kirsty, Deobhra, Rosemary and Corinna.***

**Congratulations!**

**Robert Johnson  
Senior Project Worker  
Investing in Children CIC  
June 2017**

**Investing in Children CIC**

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**investing in children**  
Promoting the Rights of Children & Young People

**This is to certify that**

**TUSLA**  
**Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's**  
**Services Committee**



**Involves children and young people in dialogue**



**Change has come about as a result**



**Children and young people agree**

*Investing in Children Member – June 2017 to June 2018*

*"Investing in Children works to ensure that children and young people have a voice and  
are able to influence the services they use"*

Signed: *Helen Mulhearn*

Helen Mulhearn  
Operations Director



Promoting the Rights of Children & Young People

**With special thanks to:**

**Longford Westmeath CYPSC Child and Youth Participation Project**

Lus na Greine Family Resource Centre, Granard

Granard Foróige Youth Club

Cara Phort Family Resource Centre, Ballinacarrigy

Emper National School, Ballinacarrigy

Springlawn Community Creche , Longford

Clonbrusk Community Creche, Athlone

Whizzkids Community Creche, Drumlish

Kim Doherty, Community Facilitator/Artist

Foróige, Longford

Longford Comhairle na nÓg

Youth Work Ireland Midlands

Westmeath Youth Service

Westmeath Comhairle na nÓg

Tusla

Longford County Childcare Committee

Barnardos Family Support Project

Longford County Council

Westmeath County Council

Longford Westmeath CYPSC Child and Youth Participation Subgroup

Longford Westmeath Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC)

Shane Crossan Crookedline Film



