

2019

Migrants Youth Consultation Drogheda

“Nothing About Us Without Us”



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Introduction

According to Census in 2016, Louth has the ninth highest youth dependency rate of 35.7% which is higher than the state rate of 32.3% indicating a large youthful population in Louth. Majority of these people were born in Ireland and the percentage of the population born in Ireland includes young people with Immigrant background.

Considering that a high number of its population were born in Ireland (including young people), a cohort of these young people would have migrant background, i.e. born in Ireland of migrant parents.

In this report, discussions from the workshop held with youth from migrant background living in Co. Louth presents a significant challenge in our society, considering the prevalence of disconnect youth from migrant background often experience within their social environments including schools.

Yet, meaningful youth engagement is a key concept not only for youth development, but also for a systems change to more effectively provide support for migrant youth and families.

Discussions from the workshop also suggest that youth born in Ireland with diverse background may experience difficulty in integrating with Irish culture which sometimes lead to cultural misunderstanding, conflict and tension in the community.

In facilitating the workshop, the meaning of positive youth engagement as adapted in this report refers to genuinely involving youth in the planning and encouraging them to advocate for themselves. In referencing youth engagement, the report focused on how to involve migrant's youth in the creation of their own destinies, challenges facing migrant youth in engaging and their experience of living in Drogheda

Objectives of the Workshop:

Workshop discussion was undertaken with youth from Polish, Nigerian, Spanish, Zimbabwean, Philippian, Scottish and Lithuanian backgrounds to explore their knowledge of youth engagement in Drogheda, their experiences of living in Ireland, challenges they face and effective ways to promote migrant youth engagement in Drogheda.

Methodology:

This workshop presents a background of challenges affecting migrant youth from engaging in Drogheda, using a Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach with a total of 30 youth from migrant communities ages 13 – 23 years participated in the discussion.

A group discussion was carried out with the migrant youth, the finding on the discussions held was grouped into different categories and a discussion was held at the end of the workshop and the youth came up with key actions on how to address the challenges identified.

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is one of a family of participatory and generative research and planning methodologies that seek to motivate participants into action while simultaneously drawing on their local knowledge and experience. This methodology was developed as a bottom-up approach to community development and planning in response to concerns about how research and planning was being done 'on' people rather than 'with' them. PLA is based on a very clear premise that local people and members of communities themselves are the real 'experts' in relation to their own sociocultural settings and issues of concern. It also endeavours to ensure that individuals and communities have a meaningful influence over decisions and processes that affect their lives. As a qualitative process, PLA also ensures that multiple perspectives are incorporated and taken into account in quite a free-flowing (but structured) way. It also ensures that community groups or participants take ownership of proposed actions and have a desire to become part of subsequent activities introduced for their benefit.

Workshop Discussion Questions

The focus group discussion applied open ended questions and closed fixed response. The following questions were used:

Q 1: WHAT IS POSITIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT?

The participants were asked to list what they understand as the meaning of positive youth engagement to them. The list further suggests the experience and identity of the participants'. The table below shows the outlined:

Nothing about us without us
Positive youth contributions
Including youth from the beginning in the planning
Helping young people find activities they are passionate about.
Empowering youth to raise their voices on issues that matter to them

Q2: WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN DROGHEDA?

The participants were asked to mention their experience of living in Drogheda. Some of the outlined responses as shown below reveal that some of the participants may have bad experience of living in Drogheda even though they are born in Ireland. The table below shows the responses on their experience of living in Drogheda.

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very safe depending on who you associate with and how late you stay outside	Stereotypes	The neighbourhood is safe depending on the area of Drogheda you live
Very boring, not having a youth club/hub to go	People saying stupid or offensive words	A lot of racist comments from young and old people e.g black monkey
Very tough	Drogheda is good but times are changing for worst	Through the years Drogheda gets more dangerous to live in, some of it is caused by what we see on the internet

Q2: WHAT ARE THE ISSUES FACING YOUTH FROM MIGRANT COMMUNITIES LIVING IN DROGHEDA?

Participants were asked to mention what issues they face living in Drogheda. The responses below show that some of the youth have negative experience both in school and in the community. The negative experiences affect their attitude to other youth and they become aggressive as a way of protecting themselves.

The table shows the responses to question 2:

English language Learning	The use of weapons (knives) and drugs is more on the high side with youths
Living in a disadvantage area	Racism
Discrimination by the authority for example a youth migrant was kicked out of Drogheda town centre	Discrimination in schools by teachers and students
Pressure to "fit in" in schools and amongst peers	Being perceived as "different"
Isolation and Depression	Lack of social networks and supports
Lack of migrant youth clubs	Lack of work experience opportunities
No youth leader from migrant community	No role model from migrant community

Q4: HOW COULD THINGS BE MADE BETTER IN DROGHEDA?

The participants were asked to come up with solutions to issues affecting them and to identify activities that can promote positive engagement.

- Role model migrant youth leaders/youth workers
- Challenge racist practise
- Acceptance & encouragement
- Set up migrant youth centres
- Facebook page to promote youth
- Play football
- Organise sports competition
- More youth leaders from migrant communities
- Provide more facilities for youth e.g more parks
- Design a poster with information and distribute
- Get active in community sports e.g GAA
- Organise fun games and activities for migrant youth
- Create a What's app group for participants

- More youth hub where youth can have chat and talk about themselves i.e that benefits the youth
- Organise more interactive youth events & workshop for migrant youth
- Encouraging youth with their dream by organising social events/activities to showcase their talents.

The following responses were analysed, categorised and ranked into key themes and actions by participants to promote positive change.

- Provide opportunities for youth leadership from migrant communities
 - a. Create more activities and choices for migrant youth
 - b. Provide financial support to migrant youth groups
- The use of music to promote integration
 - a. Organise intercultural music event for youths
 - b. Create opportunities for migrant youths to promote their music skills
 - c. Provide sponsorship for talent exhibitions to showcase migrant youth talents
- Provide the right support and training to migrant youth
 - a. Skills development programme
 - b. Deliver personal development courses
 - c. Deliver communication courses to help youth communicate well
 - d. Deliver personal hygiene
 - e. Deliver interpersonal skills to help access job and promote integration
 - f. Entrepreneurship skills
 - g. Workplace skills and Apprenticeship
- Use of Media and Graphics to reduce racism
 - a. Create a space for youth from various cultures to watch programmes about different cultures
 - b. Prevent haters and racist people from influencing other people's opinion
 - c. Use media to create more awareness about migrant youth
 - d. Promote dialogue with indigenous Irish youth and migrant youths
 - e. Promote migrant events on local radio, social media etc
- Work with schools to address racism
 - a. Engage ethnic minority led organisations to deliver issue based cultural diversity training for school teachers and students
 - b. Create effective communication and awareness raising tools
 - c. Promote equality in schools
 - d. Raise awareness about migrants youth and their activities/events in local schools, Facebook and all media centres to increase their confidence and visibility

- Increase Migrant Youth participation and confidence
 - a. Create opportunities for youth to express their ideas
 - b. Organise events to bring youth from all sectors together
 - c. Create a safe, positive setting to get together with other youth and have fun
 - d. Create a project for migrant youth that will be implemented by migrant youth themselves

Key Recommendation for Migrant Youths

- Actively promote the Social inclusion of all youths from migrant background
- Support the existing Network of migrant youth that is being put together by Culture Connect Organisation and use this existing Network to establish a migrant youth club to promote the social inclusion of all migrant youth
- Provide resources to establish migrant youth clubs led by migrant youth.
- Local authorities and agencies to sponsor the employment of a cultural competent youth worker to run and manage the youth club
- Encourage migrant youths participation and support creation and implementation of migrant youth projects and organisations
- Link with other existing youth clubs to utilise existing space/facilities.
- Facilitate construction of solid networks, intercultural dialogue and joint projects that build mutual understanding between migrant youths and the Irish youths
- Recognise and commit to addressing issues of migrant youths by providing dedicated youth work services that reach out to young people from migrant background and work closely with migrant organisations locally
- Establish programmes and activities that take into account the different needs and contributions of migrant youths.
- Empower migrant youths to access equal opportunities as their Irish peers by building the capacity of migrant youth to become youth leaders and cooperating with migrant led organisations to support them.
- Prioritise migrant youths in the context of positive engagement to prevent violence, racism, xenophobia and discrimination.
- Organise bi-weekly/monthly meetings to engage and develop youth through career building, counselling, cultural mediation, mentoring and anti-racism programmes.
- Develop targeted capacity building and cultural training programs for service providers, teachers and all agencies working with migrant youth.

- Include migrant youths issues in all relevant aspects of social services, particularly development plans and policies

Conclusion

In conclusion, the collated information from the workshop shows that through engaging migrant youth, stakeholders and communities can do a better job of creating the resources, opportunities and support needed for migrant youth to develop and participate and get involved locally. This can also help to understand what it is like to grow up in a rapidly changing environment

This report also identifies significant gaps concerning little or no efforts devoted to engaging migrant youth living in Drogheda. The various discussions described in this report highlight what can be done to help migrant youth overcome a wide range of challenges they confront as they negotiate their new communities.

The workshop also suggest that the participants desire and expect the local community and stakeholders to be culturally flexible and adapt to a wider approach of actively involving migrant youth to represent their own interest; and also engaging migrant leaders who may be more culturally competent to lead migrant youth toward effective integration in the community. If youth from migrant background can find and access a range of different opportunities and relationships throughout the community, over time they can engage in different programs and places to address their changing needs.