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- informing, advising and helping those who work with young people in a variety of settings;
- influencing and shaping youth policy and improving youth services nationally and locally; and
- promoting young people's participation, influence and place in society.

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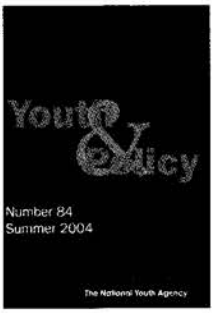

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'Learning to Listen' –
Young People and the Police in Northern Ireland

Jennifer Hamilton, Katy Radford and Neil Jarman

Recent legislative changes within Northern Ireland have brought to the fore the rights and opinions of young people and have emphasised the obligations of statutory agencies to consult with young people. In this paper we look at the attitudes and experiences of young people towards changes within the Northern Ireland policing system. We question to what extent the process of engagement and consultation by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other newly established policing bodies has or will have an impact on the lives of young people. We also raise issues around methods of good practice and the participation of young people in consultation and policy development.

Key words: policing, accountability, human rights, Northern Ireland

Policing has long been a controversial issue in Northern Ireland and police reform was an integral part of the Good Friday / Belfast Agreement. A broad ranging review of policing in Northern Ireland was undertaken by the Independent Commission on Policing and its report recommended both extensive reform of all its aspects and the creation of new structures of accountability (Patten Report, 1999). These included a Police Ombudsman to investigate complaints against the police and the Northern Ireland Policing Board to hold the police publicly to account. The most controversial aspects of policing have been related to its overwhelming Protestant make up and hostile relationships with Catholic working class communities. Less consideration has been placed on the relationship between the police and young people. However, over the duration of the peace process young people have been increasingly defined as a growing social problem and the Police Ombudsman has received increasing numbers of complaints from young people.

In recent years a flurry of procedural and legislative changes have ensured that the rights and opinions of children and young people, if not at the fore of decision-making, are certainly being given more consideration in Northern Ireland. The establishment of the Children's Commissioner and the development of a ten year strategy for children and young persons by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister may be seen to provide focal points for issues relevant to young people and children. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland (1998) Act highlights the responsibility and onus on particular sectors and service

providers to confer with children and young people as a specific constituency within those groups identified as being at risk of social exclusion. However, it is pertinent to ask what, in practical terms, are the effects of these legal changes and inclusive measures and how does their introduction impact in real terms on the lives of young people?

Within this 'child-focused' context, the Institute for Conflict Research, an independent research organisation, was commissioned by the Northern Ireland Policing Board and Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, to conduct a study into the knowledge, attitudes and experiences of young people relating to the developments and restructurings within policing generally and the two organisations in particular (Hamilton, Radford and Jarman, 2003; Radford, Hamilton and Jarman, forthcoming). In this article, we specifically consider the attitudes and experiences of young people regarding the complexities of policing within a post-conflict situation. We look at both their positive and negative responses to the strategies and practices of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), such as surveillance and community policing, to identify areas where changes in practice prove to create tension among young people. Furthermore, we look at young people's responses to being consulted on these issues, and their concerns that consultation is often an exercise that does not necessarily influence policy or procedural changes.

At one level our findings support previous research, which found hostile and suspicious relationships between the police and young people and difficult and problematic relations between young people and social order (Ellison, 2001; McVeigh, 1994; Jarman and O'Halloran, 2001; Jarman et al, 2002). Whilst some young people become involved in activities which bring them to the attention of the criminal justice system, we would concur with previous research findings that many more are regarded with suspicion simply because of their age or their practice of gathering on street corners and other public places. In Northern Ireland, this tension and antipathy is in part a consequence of local political dynamics. Yet it also mirrors the uneasy relationship between young people and the police in other industrial societies less marked by internal sectarian conflict (Cohen, 2002; Loader, 1996; Lee, 1998; Muncie, 1999, Hartless et al, 1995; Stol and Bervoets, 2002; Waddington, 1999).

While previous research in Northern Ireland has focused on how issues of sectarianism and ethno-political allegiances of young people impacts on their relationships with the police, our findings also highlight that there are widespread commonalities of perceptions and experiences of the police. These perceptions and experiences are not as significantly affected by the gender or sectarian and ethnic backgrounds of the respondents, but rather by their age and perceived social class. Furthermore, we found that young people's perceptions of the PSNI were not just dependent on the circumstances of contact, but also entrenched in and inculcated by family and community beliefs.

Methodology

The research involved both quantitative and qualitative methods focusing on the attitudes and experiences of young people towards policing in Northern Ireland. A self-completion questionnaire was administered to 1,163 young people within a broad and representative

range of organisations. These organisations included youth councils, community youth groups, groups of young offenders (and those perceived to be at risk of offending), minority ethnic communities, training schemes and a young offenders' centre. A variety of educational establishments were also targeted including secondary schools, colleges of further and higher education, training centres and a number of university campuses (Table 1, page 18). The research was primarily orientated towards 16 to 24-year-olds, but as a result of accessing young people through schools and youth centres some 10 per cent of the survey respondents were under 16 (Table 2, page 18).

Thirty-one focus groups were conducted in which a total of 242 young people participated. The groups were mainly composed of mixed gender and background although some groups were single identity. Eighteen areas within the five Educational and Library Boards in Northern Ireland were targeted to ensure a spread of locations. Figures drawn from the Northern Ireland 2001 census reveal that 50 per cent of 16 to 24-year-olds identify as Catholic and 46 per cent as Protestant. Within this research of the 1,163 people surveyed, 49 per cent considered themselves to be Catholic and 45 per cent Protestant, which is in line with the 2001 Census Results. A large majority of the sample, 98 per cent, classified themselves as having a white ethnic background, which is broadly in line with the ethnic breakdown of the Northern Ireland population as revealed in the 2001 Census.

Initially, access to young people was brokered by adult gatekeepers. However, the choice to contribute rested solely with the participants. A number of individuals and groups that were approached were unwilling to take part in the research. The reasons that were cited for their reluctance to participate included the subject matter, which many perceived to be controversial, the source of funding for the research project, which was also controversial for some, and feelings of being over consulted. Concern about these issues was also raised by a number of young people who nevertheless did choose to engage in the exercise. All the groups and individuals, who participated, saw their contribution as a form of empowerment and hoped that it enabled them to 'have a voice'.

Young People's Opinions of Police Reforms

In general the research found that there was little or no difference between the opinions of Catholic and Protestant participants towards the police. Many young people voiced concern that their desire for a police service in which all citizens could be confident was a long-term goal, but one that would not easily be achieved. Furthermore, when they were asked what main activities the PSNI should be concentrating on, the responses of both Catholics and Protestants were broadly balanced. The most frequently cited concerns for young people were paramilitary activity (47 per cent), drug dealing (45 per cent) and assaults (40 per cent).

Overall more respondents agreed than disagreed that the police were honest, professional, helpful, there to protect them and provided an acceptable service. However, more disagreed than agreed that they were fair, able to understand youth issues, a part of their community, or had improved since the organisation had changed from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to the PSNI. When these statements were cross-tabulated with community

background, it was found that fewer Protestants than Catholics felt that policing had improved since becoming the PSNI (Table 3, page 19). While many Catholics made it clear that they felt there had not been enough changes made, many Protestants felt that there had been too many. Both of these scenarios appear to underline the existence of a lack of confidence in the new policing system and as one person stated, *'I would be cautious, I wouldn't be trusting of them straight away'*.

The PSNI were regarded, with regret by most participants, to be less of a crime prevention organisation that provides a service to the community, and more of a militia. Changes to the uniforms reinforced this 'swat' team notion and a number of groups felt that the martial design of the boiler suit uniform was perceived to be alienating and distancing. As one person said, *'Somebody's been watching too many US cop shows'*. Other physical and symbolic changes that were most frequently noted included the name, the badges and types of vehicles being used, the disbandment of the police band, the pledging of the royal oath and the appointment of a new Chief Constable. There was an overarching view that the changes that had been made to policing had been done largely for political ends, *'It makes no difference, it was all done for political reasons'*, and the sense that policing was still a highly politicised service was of concern to many young people. However, participants in the focus groups saw the value of a statutory police service within the context of a democratic society, with many wanting the service to develop into a more 'civil', citizen-based service rather than one that they perceived was simply there to apprehend perpetrators, *'The organisation is meant to be there to protect and serve the public; whether they do it or not is debatable'*.

Young People's Contact and Experiences with the Police

The opinions and attitudes of young people to the PSNI varied considerably. Nearly half (45 per cent) of the questionnaire's respondents had had some form of contact with the police, with 41 per cent having had contact within the past 12 months. The nature of the contact with the police varied: being stopped and questioned and being asked to move on, were the two most frequently occurring forms of contact, especially for males. The focus group discussions revealed that most young people regard this contact as a form of harassment. Many participants commented on how their contact with the police was determined by geographical factors. Some described how their experiences in a neutral work environment were very different from when they were identified as being in an area with a particular sectarian constituency, *'I am treated with respect at (place of work) but when I walk down the street in the estate I am harassed'*. This particular individual felt that he couldn't challenge this difference in attitude. He questioned the reasons for the contrasting treatment and concluded that the difference in treatment was because of the area in which he lived, and not due to his behaviour as an individual. However, others felt that they were constantly being harassed both at home and at work, *'They stop me coming in and out of work all the time'*. This perception of constant harassment had led this young person to dislike the police. Likewise another individual said that he was *'stopped loads of times'* when he drove his girlfriend home, but he had also noted that the car was never stopped when his father drove it. This young man said that young people often felt they had to prove their innocence when they were questioned by the police, *'you're guilty until you can prove you are innocent'*.

Those who had contact with the PSNI were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction during the contact. It was found that younger participants were more inclined to be dissatisfied, 31 per cent of under 16s were very dissatisfied with the service compared to 13 per cent of 19 to 21-year-olds. More than one in five young people (21 per cent) indicated that a police officer had behaved in an unacceptable way towards them. Younger participants and males were more likely to complain of unacceptable behaviour than older age ranges and females (46 per cent of under 16s compared to 14 per cent of 19 to 21-year-olds and 33 per cent of males compared to 10 per cent of females). However, community background did not seem to affect whether unacceptable behaviour was experienced or not, with 23 per cent of Catholics and 20 per cent of Protestants reporting unacceptable behaviour. The younger age groups were more likely to report being wrongly accused of misbehaviour with over half of under 16-year-olds (51 per cent) compared to a quarter (25 per cent) of 22 to 24-year-olds.

In terms of contact as a result of being a perpetrator of crime, more males than females (17 per cent compared to only 6 per cent) had police contact. Likewise those with no qualifications (40 per cent) were more likely to have contact with police as perpetrators than individuals with higher qualifications such as Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) and degrees (2 per cent). Over half (64 per cent) of the young people who had had contact with the PSNI said that this had taken place on the street, 18 per cent said that it took place at their home while 6 per cent said it occurred at school, college or work and a similar percentage noted that it had occurred at a police station or at a court.

In the focus groups some participants recounted incidents with the police that were second-hand and had in turn become highly coloured, even mythologised, in the telling and re-telling. The focus group discussions also indicated that the young people's experiences of the police in Northern Ireland have not altered since the service became the PSNI. Some were adamant that in spite of the changes, their experiences of the police had not altered and were still predominantly negative. Within one group a young male said, *'You know there are some good cops and they aren't all bad'*. However, in spite of this recognition his opinions were predominantly negative, a reflection of his personal experiences. At times the researchers perceived that the young people felt that they had to display a rebellious and anti-authoritarian stance against the police, as this was what was expected of them whatever their experiences.

Some younger participants expressed frustration that it was always assumed by the PSNI (and adults more generally) that they were 'up to no good', with one young male recalling the following incident,

> *We were messing about playing football and the ball got stuck on the roof of the church. So we had to try and get up to get the ball ... this guy spotted us ... within minutes the police were there ... they would think we were up to no good.*

Both Protestant and Catholic young people felt that the police 'were always on their case'. The questionnaire revealed that those within the Catholic community were more likely than those within the Protestant community to report disrespectful or impolite behaviour (65 per cent compared to 50 per cent) and the use of sectarian language (19 per cent compared to 10 per cent). Protestants, on the other hand felt that they were more likely to be harassed

(32 per cent compared to 26 per cent) and wrongly accused of misbehaviour (43 per cent compared to 34 per cent) than Catholics. However, each side felt that their community was the one that suffered the most, *'Protestants get less hassle'*, *'They just back the ones on the other side (Protestants) they are their mates'*, and *'Catholics get an easier time as they are feared of them'*. Ellison (2001) found that more young Catholics than young Protestants construed that negative encounters with a police officer constituted a form of harassment, but that similar proportions had been told off, told to move on, questioned or searched by the police. Within this research the context of the 'hassle' varied. Protestants felt that they received more hassle at parades whereas Catholics felt they were subjected to more hassle or 'picked upon' during outbreaks of public disorder.

The young people involved in the focus groups raised a number of issues that were of concern to them. These issues were a consequence of their perception that the police reacted and responded differently to them because they were young. Personal experiences of the police had left many individuals with an over-riding feeling of being humiliated and harassed, and with an increased lack of trust in the organisation. The research did not establish a clear single understanding of what constituted harassment, as some people viewed harassment as the mere presence of police officers whilst others felt it involved some form of physical or verbal contact. For all, however, the experience was in keeping with McVeigh's suggestions that it is 'the use and abuse of power'. The difficulties of definition can be further understood in terms of McVeigh's (1994) emphasis that 'harassment means different things to different people'. He also found that over one quarter of all young people in Northern Ireland felt that the security forces had harassed them. The young people in this research identified a variety of forms of police behaviour that they considered constituted harassment, including verbal abuse, physical violence, the confiscation of goods, a constant police presence, and being watched or being placed under surveillance.

Some participants complained that they endured a variety of types of verbal abuse, which mainly took the form of name-calling and offensive joking. One young male said that he was picked upon because of his prominent front teeth, *'Slagging my teeth and saying "Donkey Mouth" ... sticking their teeth out the window and all'*. The adult who coordinated access to this group revealed that he had heard this individual being verbally abused and had challenged the policeman in question but he had not been satisfied with the response. Another individual said,

> *They make jokes about people and they'll try to aggravate you with comments, ... and even make offensive comments about your family ... my cousin they call him big ears in the middle of the street – it's embarrassing for him.*

It was acknowledged by some that the verbal abuse they had received was in many ways justified, as it was in response to them 'slabbering' at the police in the first instance. This in turn suggests something of a process whereby each group feels it is acceptable to verbally abuse the other. However, this does not acknowledge that verbal harassment is but one form of a range of behaviours that are offensive and abuses of power against young people. Some of the young people stated that they had either been subjected to or witnessed police brutality:

> *I saw a person getting a kicking from the peelers once right at the side of the chippy it was out in the street too. He started slabbering back and they got his head and hit it off the wall.*

Other examples of brutality included being thrown about in a police cell or in a police van, rough handling when putting on handcuffs and having handcuffs put on to ensure they *'cut into your wrists if you move in a certain way'*. This behaviour was widely condemned but was also accepted as being *'the way they (the police) operate'*. Despite a culture of physical violence and brutality being accepted in Northern Ireland (Jarman, forthcoming, PONI, 2003) and with young people perceiving forms of violence as normal (Smyth et al., 2002), physical violence was the behaviour that most young people felt would give them the right to complain, *'I would complain if they hit me or done something to me'*. In practice however, the research indicated that very few young people actually did make a complaint after experiencing unacceptable behaviour by the police. Less than one in four young people who had objected to police behaviour had made a formal complaint (Radford, Hamilton and Jarman, forthcoming).

Many of the participants felt that as young people they encountered frequent harassment and simply had to put up with being picked upon. One group of Protestants in a loyalist area of Belfast summed up how they felt, *'they are aggressive, intrusive, in your face, condescending and generally ignorant'*. This view was expressed not only by those who had been in trouble but also by young people who had witnessed the harassment of others. For some of the older participants this harassment was evident at nightclubs where the view was that a constant police presence enticed trouble:

> *You always have run-ins when you are out on a night out through the weekend ... they are always standing at night clubs in case there is any bother ... and just entice people to start.*

Some young people complained of being constantly followed, especially if they were driving. In some areas the young people were also convinced that they were being photographed secretly, *'The cameras hidden (name of building) are constantly pointing at this estate and are constantly taking photographs'*. Such activities made the individuals feel humiliated, *'You feel like a wee boy ... it makes you feel that you are doing something wrong and others who see you being hassled think, "he must be a bad one"'*. One young man felt that if he was going to be harassed for doing nothing he might as well do something to make the harassment worthwhile. Those who had encountered such harassment were quick to point out that not all the 'peelers' were guilty and that in most cases it would be either one or two individuals, *'Most of the times I've got stopped it has always been the same peeler so it has, he always, always harasses me'*.

For a number of young people the primary nature of their contact with the police was through some form of surveillance. For many this was considered a violation of privacy and an intrusive intelligence gathering exercise. Many commented on the installation of CCTV cameras, an increase in the use of still cameras by officers, in particular from vehicles, and the perceived increased use of jeeps fitted with surveillance material. In addition to issues of privacy, the methods of surveillance were also a matter of concern. Many young people raised the issue that for surveillance purposes unmarked cars were used. This increased fear in certain areas, as to who was actually monitoring the area, was it the police or was it someone from the other side? In addition some participants felt the use of cameras by PSNI demonstrated insensitivity towards the lives of citizens, with one young male stating, *'They're all perverts, taking pictures all the time'*. It was also felt that the surveillance did

not increase the safety of residents, instead it was considered that the police put their own safety over that of citizens in potentially dangerous situations, *'They don't want to get involved, they just sit and watch'*. This attitude may be bolstered by cases such as that of Robert Hamill, a Catholic man who was kicked to death by a group of Protestants in Portadown in 1997, allegedly in full view of a police vehicle.

Young people also felt that adults within the area exacerbated the situation and simply 'hanging about' gave some people cause for complaint, *'we were in my garden playing football and (name of neighbour) complained and they (the police) came and said 'is there any chance of all you moving?" '* Some participants recognised that sometimes they were in the wrong and that the police were justified but thought that on other occasions they were not given the opportunity to explain either their version of events or how they felt about the situation,

> *they actually don't listen to you right. Fair enough, sometimes you're in the wrong but sometimes they don't let you explain ... they just like to talk away and slabber.*

It was also felt that police attitudes towards young people differed from those held for adults and that *'the police don't take youths seriously'*. One young male participant said that when he went to report an attack on his car the incident was not taken seriously until his father arrived, *'they said "what do you want us to do about it?", but their attitude changed when my dad came in'*. This annoyed the youth who said he felt that he was not considered *'important enough'* to listen to. Another young male who had gone out of his way to report a faulty railway barrier also felt that he had been treated in a similar manner. The young man said that he left the station feeling *'foolish'* and felt that an adult would have been treated very differently. The experiences and perceptions among young people that the police treated them differently and in a particular, often condescending manner simply because they were young, was strong. Young people felt that police officers believed they could treat them as they wished and with little consideration or respect because there was a widely held view that groups of young people hanging around equals trouble. This perception was widespread among young people from a variety of backgrounds and in particular among young people from working class areas.

The broad similarities in perspectives among young people from different communities lends support to the contention of one focus group of young men in South Belfast. They disputed that religion had any effect on their experiences with the police and instead argued that more negative experiences were related to class background and socio-economic grouping rather than to ethno-religious background, *'It is as if they think working class have less power ... someone walking down the street in a working class community will be stopped but not in middle class area'*. Previous research indicates that young people from socio-economically disadvantaged areas are over twice as likely to have been searched by a police officer and have experienced more police instigated encounters than young people from affluent neighbourhoods (Ellison, 2001). McVeigh (1994) also found that while people explain harassment in sectarian or gender terms there is a strong correlation between being working class and being harassed.

The experiences of young men and young women were also perceived by males to differ, with young men feeling that young women were not as harshly treated, *'they discriminate*

against boys'. It was also felt that in Belfast city centre females had more freedom and were less likely to be harassed, *'If females are standing together they are less likely to be told to move on'*. The questionnaire also revealed that young women were less likely than males to experience violent behaviour (14 per cent compared to 31 per cent), while Ellison (2001) also found that females were less likely to be 'told off' or 'told to move on' by the police. However, one young woman from Derry, who had had several encounters with the police, disagreed with the young men and said that she had also been a victim of police brutality and that being female was no different. Another young woman from Belfast agreed and said that being female did not stop her from *'getting jumped'*. It is however, perceived that young women have lower levels of adversarial contact with the police as they are not stereotyped (to the same extent) by the police or adults as 'trouble' (Anderson et al., 1994).

Issues of community safety and public service appeared to be of particular concern to women. Many chose to focus on police responses to a reported threat or actual domestic violence. The overriding perception was that while police resources were readily available to respond to potential riot situations, they were rarely available for ordinary policing problems and were particularly poor in situations involving domestic violence, which left women and children at risk. Participants suggested that repeated slow responses to domestic situations played a part in an increased lack of confidence from young women, *'They don't come out quick enough for domestics'*.

The young people made a number of suggestions as to how confidence of the PSNI could be built. The suggestions included for the PSNI to become more approachable, helpful, understanding, accessible and easier to contact and be less physically threatening. In addition the young people also requested that the police and indeed adults would stop prejudging them and assuming that they were always *'up to no good'*.

Young People's Views on Joining and Recruitment

Our research found that only 17 per cent (197) of respondents considered joining the PSNI, with half the amount of Catholics (11 per cent) than Protestants (23 per cent) expressing an interest in this as a career. Many Catholics who indicated an interest in joining were discouraged by family and / or friends, *'my daddy wouldn't speak to me if I joined, when the advert came on the telly I said to him that I might join and he said don't even think about it'*. Within rural areas a particular gender bias was noted with women commenting on being discouraged from applying as the service was considered to be not an appropriate career for young women, *'it's kind of a man's job, when you hear a man's roar people stop, but women don't have that strength'*.

When respondents were asked why they would not consider joining the police, safety was the principal reason, with 42 per cent of Catholics and 31 per cent of Protestant respondents concerned about attacks on their families and their own ultimate safety. Within the focus groups individuals made comments such as, *'They would do your ma or da and put them out'; 'They're spraying registrations of vehicles on the walls in (estate name) now'; 'You wouldn't be able to live here'*. McVeigh (1994) recognised that the physical threat existed not only for serving officers but also their families and to civilians with even the most

tenuous connections to the security forces. This threat had created issues of secrecy around policing issues and the culture of confidentiality and concealment had increased feelings of mistrust and defensiveness. Participants with family connections, however tenuous, to serving or ex-police officers voiced concern that this research might compromise or endanger those taking part. Furthermore, those who perceived themselves to be known to policing organisations, were concerned that information would feed back in some way and result in (further) police harassment.

Sixteen participants disclosed that they had family members who had served within the RUC and less than five focus group participants acknowledged having family members as serving PSNI officers. Some who disclosed these relationships were often keen to distance themselves from the serving family members, *'My cousin is a disaster, he'd book his granny, he's aiming for up the ladder'*. Others' empathetic comments and the disclosures of confidences would often stimulate revealing discussions within groups, *'I know what it's like, ... it wasn't nice waiting for him to come home ... where I live they have to know where we are and what we're doing'*. While those who participated in these revelations welcomed the opportunity to influence their peers through discussion, many doubted whether their views and wishes would lead to any changes within policing that would impact on their lives.

Nearly one third of participants (32 per cent) indicated that they did not support the police service and therefore would have no desire to join. Another main reason cited was that joining the police did not fit into any overall career plan. Those who did indicate an interest in pursuing job opportunities within fields of civil rights and responsibilities commented on how they felt jobs within other organisations would be less politicised and controversial, and held more interest and personal challenges for them. However, in spite of the predominantly negative and mistrustful opinions of some participants, a number of suggestions were made in which more positive images could, should and would enable the service to become more acceptable. The media was acknowledged to play a powerful and influential role in the representation of the police and consequently affected young people's perceptions of the organisation and its works. Some groups who recounted positive personal experiences of the police felt their opinions were clouded by the negative and unsatisfactory experiences of others.

Young people felt that practices within the police service were seen to dehumanise civilians' perceptions of officers and many suggested that informal engagement with the police would be welcome, *'why can't they run the summer schemes'*; *'they should let us in for work experience'*. One young male did however comment that he felt that there was a change in how they reacted to young people, *'they are certainly more friendly, they now talk to me'*.

Conclusion

At the start of this paper we noted that issues related to the rights, needs and opinions of young people have come to the fore in Northern Ireland in recent years. Young people are increasingly being consulted by a whole range of means and for a wide variety of

reasons through research, such as the project undertaken by ICR, through focus groups and consultations on policy and strategy, and through more formal processes such as the creation of youth parliaments or youth councils. Whilst the ideal of listening to and engaging with as many diverse voices as possible may be laudable as a theoretical approach, (and a fundamental right, as determined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), it is also questionable how effective this is and how far their concerns and ideas are really taken into account. Furthermore, in parallel with the calls to listen to, and engage with young people, there is also a continuing process by which young people are demonised and stereotyped as unruly, apathetic and alienated and for many individuals and communities young people are more readily identified as the problem rather than a part of the solution. And while problems of anti-social behaviour seem to have steadily risen up the ladder of social issues, the current concerns of 'youth causing annoyance' are little more than old folk devils in new costumes (Cohen, 2002). This issue is particularly pertinent in relation to matters of policing, where the process of the hostile stereotyping of children and young people as a social problem is, as this research shows, all too evident.

The demonising process can often lead to a series of difficult and unsatisfactory negotiations and paradoxes: while young people cause problems for the police, there is recognition of a need to listen to the voices of young people, however, it is generally acknowledged these voices have to be heard within an appropriate frame and context. Furthermore, as those young people who cause problems are often reluctant to engage on terms set out by the adults, it is perhaps not surprising, therefore that adults often seek out the voices of the 'reasonable' and often most visible young people, namely those who are not a problem. The answers that they are able to provide, therefore do not always readily address the initial problems.

In Northern Ireland the police reform process has aimed to make the police more accountable to all sections of the community. But for historical reasons, the prime fracture of police legitimacy has been with working class adults in general and working class Catholics in particular. The tensions between the police and young people have been largely sidelined. The newly established representative bodies singularly failed to attract much interest from young people when they were asked to put themselves forward for membership of the Policing Board and the District Policing Partnerships. However, something of the scale of the problems became apparent from the high number of complaints about police behaviour made to the Police Ombudsman, and this was reinforced by the low numbers of complaints that were sustained through the duration of the complaints process. The contrast of 'youths causing annoyance' as the single largest issue for many police command units and the high number of complaints against the police from young people provide the two poles of the context of this research project, the aim of which was to gauge young people's experiences of policing and their attitudes to policing in Northern Ireland.

Whilst the two main policing bodies, PONI and the Policing Board, should be commended for acknowledging the problems and initiating the research, it is nevertheless questionable to what extent a consultation process with young people was an effective way to ensure that their views were taken into account. Questions still remain as to whether bodies such as those who commissioned this research will incorporate these views and findings into

their policy and working practices, thus positively changing and affecting the lives of young people and their relationships with the police. While many of the groups who participated in the research welcomed the opportunity to engage more widely with the police and to have an opportunity to influence policing policy, they also queried whether their views, recommendations and wishes would lead to any significant change. The dominant perception was that consultation *with* young people was not principally for the benefit *of* young people, but was an exercise in tokenism. Young people were keen that this opinion should be reflected within our analysis and the report from which this article has drawn its material.

It was evident from the research that young people hold a variety of preconceptions about the police just as they believe the police hold similar prejudices about young people. These recurring assumptions were not related to the participants' age, gender, social class or religious affiliation. In general, young people stated that they did not feel supported by figures of authority and often felt disenfranchised, vulnerable and powerless. One group commented that young people's attitudes towards the police were *'so poor, anything done would need to be radical'*.

In general terms practices within the police service were seen to dehumanise civilians' perceptions of officers. Many young people felt that opportunities for more informal engagement with the police would be welcome and they put forward a number of suggestions as to how greater confidence in the policing bodies could be built among their age group. The suggestions included ideas such as the police being more approachable, *'even if they would say hello when they see you'*, more helpful *'if they could even pretend they were trying to make more effort over little things that matter to us'* and more understanding, *'if they were to take people's worries more seriously it would show they respect everyone'*. However, one of the main requests was for the police (and adults) to stop pre-judging young people and assuming that they are always 'up to no good'. This stereotyping creates further tensions between the police and young people. The principal recommendation from this research was the need to develop a programme that encourages more effective engagement between the police and young people. However, a year after this research was published, there is no real evidence that either of the commissioning bodies (PONI or the Policing Board) have implemented any of the recommendations made in the report. For this research to fulfil its commitment to young people it is time for agencies to begin, as the young people requested, to *'listen to what we say'*.

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Table 1 Current Position of Respondents

Current Position	Frequency	Percentage
University	407	35
College	286	25
School	192	17
Full time training	120	10
Employed	80	7
Unemployed	45	4
Other	30	2
Total	**1160**	**100**
Missing	3	0.3

Table 2 Age and Gender Split of Participants

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Male		Female	
			Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Under 16	113	10	68	60	45	40
16-18	544	47	291	54	253	46
19-21	385	33	155	40	230	60
22-24	118	10	38	32	80	68
Total	**1160**	**100**	**552**	**48**	**608**	**52**
Missing	3	0.3	2		1	

Table 3 Opinions About the PSNI According to Community Background

	Percentage					
Statement	**Agree**		**Neither**		**Disagree**	
Community Background	C	P	C	P	C	P
I believe the police to be honest	25	48	36	29	39	23
I believe the police to be professional	36	58	32	24	32	19
I believe the police to be helpful	40	55	33	24	27	21
I believe the police to be fair	22	44	35	29	43	27
I believe the police to be there for my protection	47	61	27	21	27	18
I believe the police to be able to understand youth issues	29	34	33	32	38	35
I believe the police to be able to solve community problems	23	31	27	31	50	39
I believe the police to be acceptable	35	55	33	26	33	19
I believe the police to be from my community	14	36	32	37	54	27
I believe that policing has improved since becoming the PSNI	23	12	44	47	33	41

The Young People's Taskforce:
creating new forms of practice and policy in response to Youth Homelessness and Social Exclusion[i]

Rosie Edwards and Barry Percy-Smith

This article critically reflects on dilemmas and possibilities of developing policy and practice in response to youth homelessness with respect to wider issues of inclusion and the active participation of young people themselves. We draw attention to key contradictions and paradoxes evident in the shifting youth homelessness and social inclusion policy arena. The article then analyses the strengths and limitations of prevailing welfare models of service provision in response to youth homelessness in light of policy rhetoric. As a response we make a case for a more radical social justice approach to youth homeless interventions which gives meaning to social inclusion rhetoric in the lives of young homeless people through community based social action in the form of a Young People's Taskforce.

Key words: homelessness, social exclusion, social capital, peer support

'Homelessness is one of the worst manifestations of social exclusion' (Rosengard, 1995), yet responses to the multiple needs of young homeless people fall short of addressing the wider complexity of processes that characterise social exclusion (Baldwin et al. 1997). As Blackman (1998:4) notes: 'Youth homelessness cannot be solved solely by administrative actions such as increased allocation of accommodation'. This article discusses how young people can be centrally involved in creating a different sort of intervention in response to youth homelessness, by actively engaging with the systemic arrangements in local governance and service provision in response to wider experiences of social exclusion.

The analysis is based on an action inquiry project with the 12 Children's Society homelessness projects located throughout England and Wales undertaken by the SOLAR Action Research Centre (Percy Smith, Walsh and Thompson, 2001). The inquiry began with the aim of understanding better how project workers could help young homeless people access and maintain tenancies. The project adopted an action research approach using cycles of inquiry beginning with dilemmas of practice experienced by project workers. This participatory approach engaged project partners in generating a deeper level of learning and insight to support change in practice and policy. It involved reflecting on practice, challenging assumptions and values, and identifying paradoxes and disjunctions at play between what is espoused in policy, what is enacted in practice and what is experienced by young people (Rudd and Evans ,1998). Simultaneously, a *whole systems approach* was adopted. This involved young homeless people along with regional and programme managers within the broader context of the youth, housing and social policy arena and to understand homelessness holistically and with respect to the wider social policy system. A total of 50 young people were involved in the research. Since the research, 15 young people

have continued to work with Children's Society staff at Local, National and European levels in dialogue with politicians around issues of participation and integration.

Although the research project began with a focus upon helping young homeless people access and maintain tenancies, the use of emergent design principles in conjunction with the cycles of action research opened up possibilities for lines of inquiry to deepen understanding of youth homelessness within the context of wider policy discourses and to surface alternative choices and actions for both practitioners and young people. For example, a key line of questioning concerned the extent to which current homelessness interventions were addressing the problems of exclusion experienced by young homeless people and what inclusion means in the context of youth homelessness interventions.

The main methodological components to the research involved practice-based inquiries with young people; inquiry based workshops with practitioners, events with young people, dialogue with local partners and politicians, interviews with managers both inside and outside of the organisation and analysis of secondary material.

Homelessness and social exclusion

In its first term the present Government set up the Social Exclusion Unit with a wide brief to explore the causes of and solutions to social exclusion. This marked a sea change from the previous Government policies from 1979 onwards, which were informed by concerns about welfare dependency and what was seen as a burgeoning 'underclass' as described by the American writer Charles Murray (1985). According to the youth underclass thesis there is a stratum of youth characterised as 'quasi-criminal, anti-social, anti-work culture and welfare dependent' who threaten the security and ordered stability of wider society (MacDonald 1997:1-2). In spite of a shift in policy rhetoric since 1997 in response to theories of social exclusion, the realisation of policy initiatives in practice in relation to young people, welfare and housing benefits have continued to be influenced by deficit models of youth reflected in the underclass thesis (Land 1989; Miller 1989).

Yet, in contrast to such notions of 'dangerous youth', disengaged and unwilling to participate in society, Blackman (1997) and Craine (1997) draw attention to the extent to which socially excluded youth are actively engaged in cultures of survival, for example, through crime careers, and participation in the informal sector as a response to the limited structural opportunities. As Jones (1997) notes, rather than adopting an authoritarian 'nanny state' position in response to homeless youth, emphasis needs to shift to interventions which can prevent and redress the structural inequalities and constraints which affect young homeless people. However, drawing on post modern discourses, developments in youth transition theory (Cieslik and Pollock, 2002) have repositioned youth in the structure-agency binarism, recognising instead the extent to which transitions are a product of 'structured individualisation' (Rudd and Evans, 1998) mediated through socially contextualised practices. Within these theoretical shifts sit ideas of youth participation and user involvement in service planning and delivery, currently so prominent in public service development. Yet in many cases ideas about participation have been 'dumbed down' to consultation around pre-determined agenda and with scant attention to systemic learning and change.

Early Labour initiatives resulting from the Social Exclusion Unit exploration of marginalised groups and communities included the Rough Sleepers Unit and the Policy Action Team on Young People (PAT 12). The setting up of the Rough Sleepers Unit (RSU) in response to homelessness reflected a policy commitment to deal with the more visible manifestations of homelessness, notably getting rough sleepers off the street and into accommodation. Yet, evidence suggests that there is a far greater problem of hidden homelessness (see for example Pieda, 1996; Fitzpatrick, 1998; Smith and Guilford, 1998). Fitzpatrick et al. (2000) drawing on the work of Pieda (1996) for example note that only 5 per cent of those who said they were homeless in the last ten years reported experience of sleeping rough. Of equal concern in the Labour Government's approach to homelessness is the apparent assumption that getting homeless people off the streets and into accommodation is an effective policy response to the wider problems of social exclusion experienced by homeless people. Recent literature argues that social exclusion is characterised by multiple themes and dimensions which need to be addressed in policy responses (Percy-Smith, 2000).

The DTLR document, *More than a Roof* (DTLR, 2002a) goes some way in reflecting discourses of exclusion and homelessness (Wardaugh, 1995; Blackman, 1998). It widens the focus of the homelessness policy arena beyond crisis response 'bed and bread' models of support, to embrace the imperative of capacity building and support for participation and inclusion. At the same time, by emphasising economic causes of social exclusion, the full report of the SEU has led to policy solutions which have involved a revision of existing services to match socially excluded groups to employment opportunities, most clearly through New Deal programmes (Tonge, 1999).

There appears to be a gap between the simplistic idealism of policy rhetoric around inclusion of homeless and excluded groups and the reality of what inclusion means in practice for homeless young people and consequently for practitioners. This article argues that there is scope for more meaningful participation of young people in policy learning, practice development and service provision.

Homelessness and young people

Counter to popular views expounded in the media and reflected in policy legislation that homelessness is a result of the fecklessness of individuals (Skellington, 1994), there is mounting evidence of the structural, systemic and policy induced nature of homelessness (Rugg, 1999). This is especially the case for young people, who suffer discrimination by virtue of their age status. A significant proportion of the youth homeless population is 'rootless' as a result of breakdown in primary support networks (the family or local authority care), discriminatory housing and benefit legislation and the failings of local authorities in their corporate social responsibilities to young people (van der Ploeg and Scholte, 1997; Carlen, 1996; Quilgars and Pleace, 1999). The interpretation of Homelessness legislation has hitherto meant that many young people, single people and indeed families did not get a service unless virtually on the streets (Third, 1992). Take Gary's story for example:

> *Gary is 15. He was forced to leave home when his parents found out he was gay and has been sleeping rough. He came from nearby Southbridge but had no connections*

here in Hazelborough. He had approached the Housing Officer at the Local Authority but had been told there was nothing available and besides he was not a priority case. He was told that because he didn't have a permanent address he couldn't claim benefit. Because of his hearing impairment, the conversations with the housing and benefits officers were problematic. He said they had a bad attitude – very rude and patronising and seemed to be completely insensitive to his plight. Despite being vulnerable and in need, he did not fall under the authority's criteria of being in need and therefore left with little hope. He came to the drop in information and advice service after hearing from someone he met on the streets that the staff were friendly and supportive. He had developed a drug habit and was constantly fearful of being attacked as a result of his sexuality. Gary's immediate problem was a place to stay. The poor quality and limited availability of suitable social housing (in particular direct access accommodation) for young people is a constant problem for project workers. (Percy Smith, Walsh and Thompson, 2001)

Gary's story is a familiar one to practitioners, managers and policy makers alike: a young person ejected from home by his parents, who then bounces between life on the streets and agencies, each of whom tries to help within their remit, as he experiences increasing exclusion and disillusionment. The story not only draws attention to the importance of looking beyond accommodation solutions to youth homelessness, but also the extent to which problems of social exclusion are intertwined with the structure and functioning of local services and the paradoxes and contradictions of policy and legislation. Rather than seeing young people themselves as the problem, this research has highlighted the extent to which exclusion experienced by homeless young people is compounded by the workings of the social and public policy system itself. Accordingly the 'systemic action' approach of the research worked at multiple levels to respond to social exclusion as experienced by homeless young people, by identifying systemic or structural factors which hinder the inclusion of young homeless people.

Policy responses to youth homelessness and exclusion

The new Homelessness Act (DTLR, 2002b) has now made young people aged 16/17, care leavers and others such as ex-offenders and those fleeing domestic violence 'priority need' in respect of homelessness applications. Growing understanding of the nature of social exclusion has undoubtedly been a key factor in the development and enactment of the Homelessness Act 2002. The Act has a strong focus on mobility and choice of location for tenants. Government also hopes to maximise occupancy of social housing, tackle the issue of 'hard to let' properties in 'no-go areas' (Third, 1992) and cut the numbers of children and families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation or in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (DTLR, 2002a). Yet allocation of 'hard-to-let' properties is a poor compensatory strategy to deal with the shortage of affordable housing in communities (Third, 1992). In spite of developments to housing and homelessness legislation, many of the problems identified in the course of this research will not be overcome solely by the allocation of accommodation.

Underlying many of the policy responses to socially excluded youth, appears to be an

assumption that young homeless people can be reoriented back onto the road to inclusion by compensating for their previous disadvantage and lack of 'social capital' through various 're-activation' schemes, involving a repackaging or reorientation of existing service provision. 'Social capital' in this context is defined as:

> *a dynamic, socially, spatially, culturally, temporally and economically embedded group, network, or constellation of social relations, that has the young person at the core of the constellation and that provides authentic opportunities for everyday learning* (Raffo and Reeves, 2000:147; see also Morrow, 1999).

However, there are in-built ambiguities in the new policy framework. Youth policy appears to have travelled a different path to that of the general social inclusion agenda, focusing on the issue of a 'gap in services' for young people (SEU, 1999; Howarth and Street, 2000). The need for services such as New Deal for Young People and Connexions to channel young people into 'pathways' of education, training and employment can be seen as a direct consequence of what is an EU wide approach, which sees young people primarily in relation to their employment potential. During the research and in follow up work, young people identified this as a barrier to their personal development and moves towards social inclusion (Percy Smith, Walsh and Thompson 2001; Edwards, 2002).

Contrary to the Raffo and Reeves definition above, the Government's emphasis on service pathways in relation to the national economic interest, limits the potential for young people to develop social capital in the context of their everyday lives. Furthermore, two central aspects of youth policy which need to underpin any youth social inclusion policy – income and participation – are either weak or missing. Legislation intended to address the lack of resources experienced by young people has not yet appeared (for example: access to Income Support for 16 and 17-year-olds, unequal resources for under 25-year-olds). Additional resources designed in 1999 to target young people failing to access education, training and employment such as Education Maintenance Allowances are still awaiting implementation during 2004, and eligibility is currently linked to receipt of benefits or living at home (DfES, 2003a). All in all this indicates a Government compensating for youth exclusion rather than taking steps to facilitate inclusion. Meanwhile, whilst the work of the Children and Young People's Unit reflected in the policy document *Learning to Listen* (DfES, 2001) asks Government departments to produce plans for 'listening to children and young people', legislation does not require the participation of young people in service development, in the same way that adults are beginning to be involved (DTLR, 2002b). The resulting reports summarised in a DfES update (2003b) reflect a series of responses focused on describing consultations with groups of children and young people, rather than their impact or outcomes for systems and policy change.

However, the recent groundswell of policy initiatives such as Connexions, Supporting People, Leaving Care Bill and Quality Protects have opened up new possibilities for responding to youth homelessness through new forms of local governance – for example, by bringing voluntary and statutory sectors into new forms of relationship (Daly, 1996; Taylor, 1997) – and through greater emphasis on the participation of young people themselves in shaping communities and the development of services that affect them (Finn and Checkoway, 1998). At the same time, the changing context of local governance in terms of the Modernising

Government Agenda (DTLR, 2002c), the imperatives of user-involvement in developing, implementing and monitoring services, and the ethos of building multi-agency capability in public service provision, challenge local service providers to look differently at what they do.

In spite of the rhetoric of youth and social inclusion policy, the corporate social responsibilities enshrined in these initiatives, and accountability through best value reviews and funding targets, insufficient attention has been directed to the learning and change required within social and public policy systems and local governance structures to address problems of social exclusion that young homeless people experience. With increasing pressure for quality and effectiveness in solutions to tough social problems such as youth homelessness, there is a need to look beyond 'simple' accommodation solutions to broader issues of social inclusion and participation and what this means in practice. This requires supporting critical reflection on the assumptions and practices which characterise the implementation of policy to reduce youth homelessness and social exclusion. The data from our research challenges researchers, policy makers and practitioners to move beyond welfare models of service provision (Doel and Marsh, 1992; Payne, 1997) to social justice models of interventions constructed around imperatives of social action, participation and accountability in the governance of local service provision and social policy interventions.

Responding to youth homelessness: from crisis response to social justice

Good practice in Children's Society homelessness projects was highlighted in a 'hub and spoke' model of service provision, and in two young tenant support schemes. Critical reflection on these practices in the research process with respect to broader barriers faced by young people in the housing and benefits system, provided insights into how possibilities for new choices and actions emerged in the form of a Young People's Taskforce.

The 'hub and spoke' model of service development for young people adopted by three Children's Society projects started from the premise that issues such as homelessness, running away, and being in the Public Care system were likely to be interrelated. Project managers therefore developed a system of holistic advice and support services with a combination of workers and partners from inter-related jobs and professions. This approach was endorsed in the NPI report *Sidelined* (Howarth and Street, 2000).

The model has several strengths. In particular it creates a coordinated framework at user and management levels in response to young homeless people's multiple needs. Where agencies are working together in this way, the result can be a seamless service for the user and a cost-effective way of providing quality services. Its limitations are in three main areas. It spends substantial time resolving problems created by conflicts in national policy or its interpretation (for example education and training or Housing Benefits). It cannot resolve the inadequacies of resources imposed by the limits of national policy (for example, benefit levels and restrictions). There is a focus on service development and provision by adults. Service users are consulted as part of project evaluation, but user involvement is not part of the model.

A project working with young people in the above set of circumstances will always be in

the position of not maximising its use of resources, because of the shortcomings of other services: the most glaring example of this is the allocation of property to young people without either the basic resources to kit it out, or the basic income to live on. The result of delays in processing benefits changes, in particular Housing Benefit, can lead to eviction proceedings being instituted by the very agency which allocated the property. It depends on which agencies are round the table, as to which agencies see themselves having a stake in helping young people to succeed. The Job Centre can be an antidote to young people's aspirations, having been told by teachers or tutors that they should strive for academic achievement, and then being told by the Job Centre that they need to get a job, rather than continue their education. If young people are themselves not 'round the table' then attitudes and discrimination will be slow to change. For example, many hard-pressed housing departments take the view that 'young people should be at home with their parents' without appreciating the range of circumstances where this is neither possible nor desirable.

Analysis of problems within the 'hub and spoke' approach to Youth Homelessness and Social Exclusion, suggests that the following issues are implicated. The model is based on the development of service provision within the current legislative framework. Where that framework is inadequate or conflictual, then the partners either attempt to compensate for systems failure, accept the limitations or push for systems change. Current Youth Policy is premised on young people staying at home until they can resource independent living. Exceptions to that are dealt with by a system of labelling which provides an entitlement for identified groups: for example, young offenders, young people leaving care. Young people who fall outside that labelling system are not deemed priority and do not therefore access the same level of services.

The new Homelessness Act 2002 offers an opportunity to assist more young people experiencing homelessness, through making them 'priority need'. However, unless the resources are made available in areas of housing stress, then a system of gate-keeping or rationing will continue. For example: inappropriate use of mediation schemes as a hurdle to prevent young people moving out; increased use of Bed and Breakfast for those not considered or accepted as 'priority need'; development of institutional settings to 'cope with' young people experiencing aspects of social exclusion.

This rationale accepts that limits to services can best be addressed through gate-keeping and that resource issues raised by extensions to services can best be controlled through identification of key groups in greatest need and targeting those resources. The problems with this approach are that it neither offers consistency, nor long term solutions, and requires substantial use of resources to compensate for 'systems failures'. Moreover, in terms of the policy agenda set by the present Government of ending child poverty and tackling social exclusion, this model will not alone offer a way forward.

In the course of the research young people identified the need to be listened to by service providers, to be involved in shaping services, but also the need for help in developing informal support networks at community level. Some of those young people joined others in a European Partnership 'Participation and Social Inclusion' project (2001–2). They followed up these ideas at project and partnership level and developed a workshop where they

described their experience of social exclusion as a wall of interlocking barriers, which could be broken down and rebuilt creating a system of joined up possibilities (BAGEJSA, 2002).

EXCLUSION WALL

LABELLING AND DISCRIMINATION	LACK OF CONFIDENCE	WORKERS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BEING HOMELESS
LACK OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND SUPPORT	LIMITED LIFE SKILLS	XOUNG PEOPLE NOT SEEN AS PRIORITX GROUP BX STATUTORX AGENCIES
BUREAUCRATIC MAYE AND LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN STATUTORX SERVICES	ATTITUDES OF PROFESSIONALS	INSUFFICIENT CONTINUITX IN PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT
INADEQUATE SERVICES-POOR ACCESS TO SERVICES	INSUFFICIENT FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES	NO OPPORTUNITX TO HAVE A SAX IN SOLUTIONS

BUILDING BLOCKS OF INCLUSION

BETTER LOCAL RESOURCES	EFFECTIVE MULTI-AGENCY WORKING	QUALITY STANDARDS IN PROFESSIONAL WORK
WORKER TRAINING	SHARING LEARNING EXPERIENCES	INFORMATION SERVICES TO IMPROVE DECISION MAKING
APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE		COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Through the active involvement of young people in shaping thinking and practice, policies and systems can become more effective, and at the same time young people are able to develop capacities to realise inclusive futures.

Young tenants support: building capacity for participation and integration

The model developed by the Young Tenants Support Project (YTSP) in The Children's Society in London offers a different approach to the same issues. This project has focussed on offering flexible personal and group support to young homeless people. Whilst the project still forms the first point of contact for young people, it does not provide the range of 'on the spot' services seen in the hub and spoke model. YTSP has concentrated on developing a contract with the young person, covering what they need and what YTSP will try to do as a basis for working together. Needs are identified by young people and responses to these needs negotiated with project workers, who work flexibly to support young people in relation to the whole range of issues: from health and welfare to finance and housing for a flexible amount of time. Project premises are seen as a resource and group support opportunities are provided at the project and in the community. The project is developing peer education opportunities for young people, which can be accredited and provide ongoing support and have developed training and placement opportunities for staff from local agencies to improve their understanding of the project and issues facing young people.

The advantages of working in this way are that young people are encouraged to seek support from others with direct experience of the same issues, that support is not confined to the 'safe territory' of the project, but based in the community where young people spend most of their time, that the partnerships built with external agencies are based on a premise of learning about the issues facing young people in order to support them and on learning from young people as well as from working colleagues. The risks of this model relate to the ability of the project to engage partners in the ways described, rather than to attempt to 'be the magician' for young people. Later we will also refer to the other Young Tenants Support good practice model developed by Inline, Newcastle.

Beyond the breach: developing the Young People's Taskforce

One of the key outcomes of this research is the identification of the need for service managers and developers to work with young homeless people to bring about systemic learning and action for change. Unless change is owned by those currently experiencing exclusion, they are likely to have an ambiguous commitment to measures to overcome that exclusion. This experience implies the need to change the emphasis in current social policy in relation to homeless and socially excluded young people. The impact of current policy is to coax and coerce young people into narrow tram lines of programmes, such as New Deal, and create a series of hoops in relation to Benefits and Housing claims, which only the best supported and most determined will overcome. Not only is this counterproductive to reaching the most excluded young people, but it ensures that those most at risk stand least chance of benefiting. Current policies are therefore likely to 'cream off' the more accessible young people, leaving the majority of those affected still experiencing homelessness and exclusion.

Reflecting with staff and young people on the pernicious effects of statutory procedures in housing and benefits systems, inconsistencies across local authority departments and disjunctions between policy, practice and young people's lived realities, we therefore asked the question: 'What developments would need to happen to address these problems?' Out of this exercise emerged the concept of the *Young People's Taskforce*, developed around broader visions and principles of social justice, participation and inclusion. Central to the Young People's Taskforce is the active participation of young people themselves in responses to youth homelessness. This contrasts with other 'taskforces' – such as Youth Homelessness Action Partnership; Scottish Homelessness Taskforce (Scottish Executive 2001) and the Melton Task Force in Australia (Grace and Romeril, 1994) – which are orientated towards practitioners and policy makers.

There are two major strands to the Young People's Taskforce. First, it ensures that young homeless people receive appropriate peer and professional support in accessing and maintaining tenancies. By allowing young people to articulate their own needs and receive support from peers who have experience of homelessness, rather than solutions provided by professionals based on assumptions about homelessness, the likelihood of successfully maintaining tenancies and addressing exclusion in meaningful ways is increased. The second overarching rationale for the Taskforce is to ensure young homeless people are able to actively participate in influencing policy, provision and procedures that affect them. Both of these rest on the assumption that young people themselves are able to play a key role in solutions to youth homelessness.

The proposal of a Young People's Taskforce has several inter-linked elements, which are designed to take youth homelessness interventions beyond service level provision, firstly at personal and community levels, then at agency and systems levels. At a most basic *individual level*, peer support begins to connect young people into supportive community networks. Young people involved in the TCS action inquiry said that friends and siblings were the people they most often turned to. Writers such as Ridge (2003), Morrow (1999), Percy-Smith et al. (2003) identify from conversations with children and young people both the importance of friendship networks in creating social capital, and the difficulties faced by children and young people in communities where there are barriers to this process. Young people from South London described how the development of peer support networks can not only strengthen the community networks of young people, but provide an ongoing system for participation and inclusion at a wider *community level*.

This moves the familiar concept of peer support both upward a level as a self sustaining and renewing system and outward as a supportive community network. The impact of spreading the concept of peer support to become both a more systematic approach and a cross age group initiative is that young people's experiential learning can be valued by peers, agencies and across the generations, strengthening the respect which the young people involved in the European Programme identified as crucial to their social inclusion. At a local community level, this then means that a 'taskforce' approach encourages and enables local people and agencies to include young people in forums to influence local decision making. It becomes not only worth their while, but a positive asset, where young people have a unique contribution to putting the community jigsaw together.

At an *agency level* the Taskforce framework offers the chance to systematise training opportunities for agencies to learn from young people. Whilst there are examples of good practice from agencies at local and national level, the concept of the Taskforce encourages agencies to take a systematic approach, with young people in the lead. Taking a 'taskforce' approach means that young people decide on the pace and form of personal changes, for example in terms of transitional stages to independent living, in terms of education and training or other major issues. Equally the framework provides the opportunity for them to influence government policy and practice at all levels.

Current experience shows the difficulty of moving beyond the 'good practice' material which abounds in Government and Local Government reports. The Taskforce offers a means for an approach to have an impact on the mainstream in terms of the pace, replication, and spread of projects and programmes. Above all it offers an opportunity for young people to steer those changes, taking a range of roles, from peer support, to forum involvement, to becoming managers, researchers, workers or advisers. The early work on this framework has envisaged young people initially working with and within an existing organisation to achieve this influence, but developing with the support of other stakeholders an independent organisational vehicle, managed by young people, to steer this approach at a national level.

Ideas developed by staff and young people within the 'taskforce' concept aim to tackle some of the powerlessness and exclusion young people identified in the *wall of exclusion*. Themes from this work are echoed in the recent reports from the Trust for the Study of Adolescence. In particular the idea that participation develops personal and social life skills and enables young people to be part of communities (Roker and Eden, 2002); the development of models of adulthood through young people's own accounts and views of growing up (Thomson and Holland, 2002).

Since the development of the *Young People's Taskforce* concept, staff and young people in The Children's Society projects have made particular progress in taking this learning forward. At a local level, dialogue with local partners in three areas has gained their support, as well as creation of formal channels for young people to join inter-agency forums tackling homelessness and social exclusion. Young people and staff have also developed training opportunities for staff and students of local agencies (such as Social Services, Housing and Connexions) to learn from their experience. Peer Education schemes have been established with peer accreditation in conjunction with partners. Contacts with Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal partnerships have been established to look at ways of developing more cohesive community networks. Young people have given a presentation on 'capacity building' as part of a European Partnership dedicated to enhancing the participation and integration of socially excluded young people. Young people have also communicated their experiences and insights to key Government Departments tackling Homelessness and Social Exclusion (Edwards, 2002) and have produced a CD-Rom for partner agencies documenting and commenting on the Housing and Homelessness Research.

These have been modest, though respectable, achievements given the pressure on workers to deliver against central government targets and a lack of funding (particularly for voluntary sector projects) to take the taskforce forward wholeheartedly. What this suggests is that developments to social policy interventions, however noble, require a level

of commitment from key local partners. At the same time practitioners need to be open to challenging their own thinking and practices within a culture of practice learning and social responsibility. This may be difficult to achieve as a necessary precondition, rather it is more likely to develop as part of the learning process implicit in the Taskforce.

Having reflected on the progress of the 'Youth Taskforce' it is appropriate to include some of the feedback from staff and young people developing this model of working. Young people and staff from Inline, Newcastle saw the Taskforce approach as a powerful and successful way of tackling issues of youth homelessness and social exclusion. They gave most emphasis to the fact that the Taskforce, as set up, was able to tackle a specific issue holistically using community development methods. Whilst some staff were engaged in service provision and others supported the taskforce development, they saw the two as needing to work in an integrated way together. This provides useful understanding about some of the limits of current participation initiatives, where the importance of participation sometimes is emphasised beyond the particular sets of issues needing resolution.

Young people and staff confirmed the value of peer education, support from voluntary sector workers and from strategic managers in public agencies. They also identified positive policy changes in services at local and national level resulting from their work and gave particular credit to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Connexions national team for their openness and willingness to adapt. Young people felt strongly that they were now better supported both by local staff and each other; they also pointed to the widening network and cyclical involvement of young people as criteria for success and sustainability, validating the role of social capital development in solutions to exclusion.

Reflection on the use of Social and Organisational Learning as Action Research in innovating responses to youth homelessness

This project has demonstrated how the adoption of a whole-system action inquiry approach can generate more innovative and creative alternatives for policy and practice whilst giving real meaning to inclusion in the lives of homeless young people. Through the Taskforce young people are now able to participate more actively in solutions to their own problems through different forms of social action at different levels in the system. The emphasis is not on individual solutions, rather on facilitating and supporting young people's participation by developing appropriate structures; or a process of 'structured individualisation' as Rudd and Evans (1998) note. The evidence provided by the Taskforce experience adds further weight to refute the validity of the 'underclass' thesis and instead illustrates that socially excluded young people are able to participate actively in society and carve out pathways to inclusion, if appropriate contexts are provided to counteract structural inequalities and systemic injustices.

By using a collaborative action inquiry approach we have been able to bring young people and professionals together to explore, learn and co-generate responses to difficult social issues which are meaningful for all stakeholders, but at the same time build capacity with

individuals and systems which might not otherwise have been possible. As Hawtin and Kettle (2000: 124) also argue:

> *... participatory methods may, if accompanied by certain values and beliefs, also be a toll for real inclusion and empowerment [...] based on the belief that whole communities can develop solutions to their problems by setting their own agendas, developing community initiatives and even delivering services which are managed by the community to meet the community's specific needs* (see also Burns et al, 2004).

The action research process with The Children's Society uncovered significant tensions between on the one hand a model of professional interventions tied to service level agreements, targets and contracts and, on the other, a user-led style of service development, where participation in development of the service model is an important factor in the success of the service. Although The Children's Society overall identified a commitment to involving young people in service development, this has happened in a range of ways from consultation of users through to direct user involvement in service development and indeed in organisational governance. The commissioning of this action research as 'participative action research' with SOLAR marked a commitment by the then management team to organisational learning as well as user participation.

However, the commitment to the Taskforce involves a further series of steps for organisations taking a lead in the way TCS has done. In the short term they need to establish with young people a model of service provision to aim for. They need to persuade partners not only to co-resource the service development, but the capacity building and participation too. The vision is that this could eventually be a young person led organisation, although the current message from young people involved in developing the taskforce is that participation needs to be bound up with service delivery and policy change in order to tackle homelessness and social exclusion (Edwards, 2004).

Whilst there are significant systemic implications for 'revolutionising' local governance in ways implicit in the Taskforce, there are also currently a number of opportunities which are conducive to implementation of the Taskforce. First, government programmes, as mentioned earlier emphasise participation and provide a wide range of resources to tackle homelessness and social exclusion. Second, there has been an increase in commitment to participation across the sectors, notably in health and social care, but also evidenced in voluntary sector initiatives, volunteering and in the whole corporate social responsibility movement. Third, the emphasis from all sectors on 'joined up working' presents opportunities for working differently, and places more stress on effectiveness of practice interventions. This can best be achieved through the central involvement of users themselves. Fourth, the changing relationship between government and the voluntary and community sectors at local levels are opening up new possibilities for welfare service provision and a new vision for local government (Daly, 1996; Taylor, 1997).

However, there are also potential barriers. Voluntary organisations have day-to-day financial concerns to tackle. Since this research, five projects have been cut as a result of reorganisation across The Children's Society. Despite the key role the voluntary sector plays in providing a lifeline to many of the most vulnerable young people, their ability to do so is so often undermined by financial insecurity. Recent reports show that large

national voluntary organisations with a strong core service base are concerned that the lack of core funding from Government has led to the voluntary sector in effect 'subsidising' state responsibilities (*Third Sector*, June 18 2002:17). Second, Government's commitment to increasing involvement of the voluntary sector in service provision also requires consideration of the public accountability of charities (*Charity Times*, June 2002). This is currently being addressed by the Charity Commissioners, the Treasury and the Performance and Innovation Unit within the Cabinet Office. Reports of evaluation of Government area-based initiatives indicate not only a concern about their impact on regeneration in those areas, but about the difficulty of balancing the tension between community participation and Local Authority control (New Start, May 2002). Third, in spite of an increasing acceptance of the imperative of user participation across local authorities, there is a need for a shift in the culture and thinking of many local authority departments out of traditional paternalistic 'nanny state' roles as providers of welfare, to a situation whereby power, and therefore resources, are ceded to communities and voluntary groups in response to problems. Fourth, despite rhetoric commonly enshrined in local government documents about joined-up working, user involvement and partnership, local government has yet to give this real meaning in practice by bringing about the necessary changes in local governance and in terms of generating desired outcomes.

This research has also highlighted the need for a culture and ethos in organisations which can facilitate learning and change in social and public service responses to difficult issues. Those locations where thinking was most advanced shared the following features: valuing of an action inquiry approach; taking time to talk with young people, partners and colleagues about 'how to do things better'; in-built systems which encourage this to happen; managers who support and encourage; organisational opportunities internally and externally to disseminate. This could be characterised as a problem solving, learning and valuing approach, which looks for opportunities, encourages others to blossom and creates simple ways forward.

However, the challenge remains of how to create action inquiry based approaches in response to complex social issues at a 'whole-systems' level. The cry of 'what works?' reverberating through discussions about evidence based practice, is not necessarily sufficient to resolve the problem of homelessness and social exclusion. For example: a reduction in clients might be a measure of success for a hard pressed Housing Department, but those same young people may still be homeless. The Taskforce offers a way forward, not because it creates yet another initiative, but because it provides a framework within which agencies, young people and others can tackle a complex range of issues together, at local regional and national level in ways that are realistic and meaningful. Its success will rely on the following key elements: willingness of agencies to collaborate, critically reflect and change their systems and practices; commitment of organisations to learning from experience; belief that young people are an asset rather than a liability; particular commitment to including the most excluded, especially young people with disabilities and from black and minority ethnic communities; willingness to commit organisational resources to working in this way; acceptance that all of the above may mean a shift in the balance of power between young people experiencing homelessness and social exclusion and those of us who have hitherto been service providers.

This action research project took as its priority one of the most intractable youth policy issues – youth homelessness and social exclusion. It has demonstrated the value of, and the need for, a 'golden triangle' approach to the issue, based on an integral relationship between practice, research and policy, where young people are at the heart of the triangle in terms of their active involvement. Ultimately the 'taskforce' approach has challenged the idea that participation can be practiced in the abstract. Young people and staff in projects like Inline have identified and achieved clear service development and policy shifts with a local and national impact by working with service developers and policy makers. Finally, in order to avoid the fragmentation which has often been the hallmark of practice, research and policy in a sphere such as youth homelessness and social exclusion, there is a need to develop collaborative networks which include practitioners, researchers, policy makers and young people, (Hill et al, 2004) where work on ideas like the taskforce can be taken forward together.

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Footnote

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The theoretical contribution of adventure education to those of criminology and youth work, in understanding the prevention of youth crime

Geoff Nichols

This paper synthesises theoretical understandings of the process of adventure education, criminology and youth work, providing an improved understanding of the process of youth development and focussing on the reduction of youth crime. The risk/protection factor model from criminology and targeted skills development approaches in youth work are contrasted with a process/outcome model derived from theoretical understandings of adventure education illustrated with empirical studies of programmes working with long-term offenders. A synthesis of the models offers a bridge between the intangibles of 'traditional' youth work and current practice, aiding understanding the process of such programmes. This has implications for the design and evaluation of youth crime reduction programmes aimed at personal development which use outdoor adventure activities and youth work methods. The synthesis provides a starting point for further evaluation of programme effectiveness.

Key words: youth work, adventure education, criminology, process, evaluation.

This paper adds an understanding of the process of adventure education to those of criminology and youth work; particularly those programmes designed to reduce youth crime. The resulting synthesis provides an improved understanding of the process of development of young people, with a particular focus on understanding how programmes might reduce youth crime. The risk/protection factor model from criminology (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996) is criticised as lacking understanding of the process of programmes and as having too little emphasis on the role of the actor. Current practice in youth work is criticised as being too concerned with narrowly defined and measurable targets of skills development (Huskins, 1996, 1998; DfEE, 2000). These approaches are contrasted with a model derived from theoretical understandings of adventure education (Nichols, 2000a), illustrated with empirical studies of programmes working with long-term offenders (Nichols, 1999a; Maruna, 2001). This third model is concerned with both the process and outcomes of work with young people.

Although these contributions come from independent disciplines they have considerable convergence. A synthesis of the models offers a bridge between the intangibles of what Smith (2003: 54) has termed traditional youth work and current practice. It contributes

to understanding the role of programme content and mentors in the process of such programmes. Thus it has implications for the design and evaluation of programmes aimed at crime reduction among young people; programmes aimed at personal development, especially through the use of outdoor adventure activities; and youth work. The synthesis of these approaches provides a starting point for further evaluation of programme effectiveness; drawing particularly on the approach of scientific realism (Pawson and Tilley, 1997), which understands causality as a combination of human agency and its reaction to new opportunities and resources.

Understanding crime prevention programmes using the risk/protection factor model

The juxtaposition of risk and protection factors has a simplistic attraction (Farrington, 2000: Witt, 2000). Its starting point is the identification of factors which appear to have a causal relationship to crime because they have a strong statistical relationship to recorded offending. The risk / protection factor model has been used as the basis of the three original 'Communities That Care' demonstration programmes, which are being piloted in the UK (Communities That Care, 1998) and the larger programme of 23 projects (JRF, 2004). This programme is an adaptation of one under the same name which has been implemented in the United States. The programmes aim to identify local risk factors and implement protection factors, through 'community mobilisation' of local people and professionals (JRF, 2004).

The research on risk and protection factors is summarised by Catalano and Hawkins (1996). The risk factors which predispose an individual towards delinquency and drug abuse; which are not defined terms; include: 'community norms favourable to those behaviours, neighbourhood disorganisation, extreme economic deprivation, family history of drug abuse or crime, poor family management practices, family conflict, low family bonding, parental permissiveness, early and persistent problem behaviours, academic failure, peer rejection in elementary grades, association with drug-using or delinquent peers or adults, alienation and rebelliousness, attitudes favourable to drug use and crime, and early onset of criminal behaviour' (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996: 152).

One source of the identification of risk factors is Farrington's (1996) statistical analysis of a longitudinal study of 400 London males. Risk factors are deduced from their correlation with onset of offending. A limitation of this approach is that it does not help us understand the process by which these factors interrelate and 'any theory of the development of offending is inevitably speculative in the present state of knowledge' (Farrington, 1996: 105). As Farrington states, as social problems interrelate it is difficult to know what causes what. It is difficult to decide if any given risk factor is an indicator or a possible cause of anti-social behaviour. A methodological criticism is that Farrington's approach gives too much weight to the impact of circumstances and none to agency, the ability of the individual to react to these circumstances. As one of the few pieces of longitudinal research it is valuable, however, as Pitts notes (2003) it was specific to a particular place and time, which may limit its general applicability: white boys in 1960s' London.

Theory also has to explain why the risk factors have a differential impact, that is, not all people subject to them become involved in crime. This explanation is provided through the existence of protective factors, which include: '(1) individual characteristics, including resilient temperament, positive social orientation and intelligence; (2) family cohesion and warmth or bonding during childhood; and (3) external social supports that reinforce the individuals' competencies and commitments and provide a belief system by which to live' (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996: 153).

While these protective factors are intuitively plausible, the evidence supporting them is much more limited than that supporting the risk factors. As Catalano and Hawkins acknowledge (1996), the understanding of the mechanisms by which the protective and risk factors interact is at present the subject of theory which needs to be substantiated by further research. They propose a 'social development' model which describes the process by which the individual is socialised into norms of behaviour. In general this involves four stages. The individual perceives opportunities for involvement and interaction in 'socialising units' of school, family, community institutions and peers. They then become involved in these and develop skills to do so. They receive reinforcement from the socialising unit in the role they take. This leads to a strong bond with the unit, an identification with its norms and values, which then become internalised and act as a control over the individual's behaviour. This can explain socialisation into pro-social or anti-social norms. In essence this model emphasises the influence and constraints of social structure on the individual, and gives little weight to personal agency; that is the extent to which the individual freely chooses which 'social units' to interact and identify with. It does not consider how the balance between agency and structure will change at different times and circumstances. For example, although it states that perceived opportunities for involvement and interaction precede involvement in such units, the child has no choice of involvement in his or her family, which is a major source of norms and values. On the other hand, the adolescent has a very wide choice of 'social units' to affiliate to. However, their model is refined to emphasise the role of different socialising units at four stages in a young person's development. Implications for crime reduction interventions are that they have to operate to increase the influence of pro-social 'social units' at the various stages of development, although the examples given by Catalano and Hawkins (1996: 183) are just theoretical.

Similarly, Farrington, whose longitudinal research was influential in identifying risk factors, has proposed a model to understand involvement in anti-social activity. Farrington's model proposes three stages that lead to anti-social behaviour, which is a consequence of the interaction of energising, directing and inhibiting factors. Energising factors are: desires for material goods, status and excitement; boredom, anger and alcohol and drugs. The directing stage is where the motivations in the energising phase are not able to be met by legal means. In the inhibiting phase, 'antisocial tendencies can be reduced (or increased) by internalised beliefs and attitudes that have been built up in a social learning process as a result of a history of rewards and punishments' (Farrington, 1996: 109). Farrington describes how these would include attitudes of parents and empathy with parents.

In common with Catalano and Hawkins (1996) this is a general theory of behaviour. Although Farrington acknowledges the interaction of the individual and the environment

his theory is not supported by qualitative research which attempts to describe how the individual perceives this interaction. In general, the explanation for offending is based on deductions from statistical relationships, so can be criticised as paying insufficient attention to agency.

Farrington advocates a wide range of interventions to reduce antisocial behaviour. These include: adolescent pregnancy prevention, more home visits to pregnant women, pre-school programmes to help children with education, parent training, reducing socio-economic deprivation, reducing contact with delinquent peers, teaching children to resist delinquency, making school more acceptable to children and changing the local community. These interventions are extremely broad ranging. Farrington's model of how people become involved in crime is not precise enough to decide which of these many interventions might be most useful in any particular circumstance.

Both Farrington, and Catalano and Hawkins (1996), have put forward general models of how people become involved in crime, which are general models of how people adopt any particular behaviour. They have both seen the need to develop understandings of the processes by which both people become involved in crime and avoid becoming involved, and desist. However, these are not based on research and do not explore how individuals perceive their situation, and how this perception changes. This reflects criminological theory's emphasis on inferring causation from statistical regularities and an emphasis, until recently, on a single direction of causality, from the environment to the individual, rather than understanding a dynamic interaction. Pitts (2003) has made a more sustained critique of the risk / protection factor approach which he places in the context of the history of political strategies to address youth crime. These strategies have led to the widespread adoption of cognitive skills development programmes, such as those of Ross and Fabiano, (1985). Pitts argues that while Farrington et al.'s risk factors, and Ross and Fabiano's programmes, might appear to provide evidence to lead policy, the evidence itself can be challenged and appears to reflect a 'selective amnesia' (Pitts, 2003: 92) to other research findings and alternative explanations. For Pitts the:

> *rise to pre-eminence of Reasoning and Rehabilitation (Ross and Fabiano's programmes) as a mode of intervention is accounted for as much, if not more, by its ideological, economic and administrative fit with the new forms of penalty emerging in the US and UK justice systems in the late 1980s and 1990s and effective entrepreneurism on the part of its proponents, as its explanatory power of rehabilitative impact*
> (Pitts, 2003: 93).

The implications of these theoretical contributions have been explicitly built into the 23 Communities that Care projects in the UK (Communities That Care, 1998). These aim to promote protective factors and processes. These include: strengthening bonds with family members, teachers and other socially responsible adults or friends; promoting clear and consistent rules and expectations about healthy and pro-social behaviour: giving young people opportunities for involvement and to feel valued; promoting social and learning skills; and giving young people recognition and praise. The programmes are the subject of evaluation which has produced interim results so far (France and Crow, 2001) but not yet an analysis of changes in measured risk and protection factors.

'Good practice' in youth work

There are interesting parallels between developments in youth work and criminology. Youth work now has an emphasis on 'working with young people at risk' (Smith, 2003: 47; DfEE, 2000). There is an emphasis on developing competencies, meaning particular skills; corresponding closely to the cognitive competencies of Ross and Fabiano, discussed above in terms of 'protection factors'. It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which the historical development of approaches to contemporary youth work reflect the influences identified by Pitts (2003) in the development of criminological theory and policy.

An influential contributor to policy formation has been John Huskins, a former Chief Inspector of Youth Work and more recently, a consultant. His second manual, *From Disaffection to Social Inclusion: A social skills preparation for active citizenship and employment* (1998) is labelled as a 'handbook for those working in youth programmes to address disaffection, including the Connexions Service ... and Youth Offending Teams'. Huskins (1996: 1998) emphasises that projects must first help people develop self-esteem and a positive life attitude. This is the initial requirement for encouraging participants to benefit from activities in which they increasingly take responsibility for themselves. Through these they can develop a range of social skills. Huskins defines these as recognising and managing feelings, feeling empathy with others, problem solving, negotiation skills, values' development, action planning and review skills. The development of these skills is progressive. Good quality work involves the progressive empowerment of the individual to take a more active and responsible part in their own development; to become more pro-active (Huskins, 1996).

The social skills' development identified as being important by Huskins (1996) in youth work, corresponds to the 'cognitive competencies' identified by Ross and Fabiano (1985) as being developed by successful programmes aimed at reducing offending behaviour. Huskins's books prescribing the process of youth work have sold extensively, but this may be as much because they fill a theoretical vacuum, as because of their practicality. They lead to a focus on the individual, in the same way that Smith has also identified in the Connexions and Transforming Youth Work agenda. For Smith (2003: 52), both of these focus, 'almost exclusively on the individual ... they both utilise what is essentially a deficit paradigm...a public health model that identifies, isolates, and then treats the subject in order to restore him or her to good health ...'. Further, characteristic of contemporary youth work, Huskins offers a systematic use of performance indicators to ensure accountability. This, if fully implemented, would contribute to the 'explosion in paperwork' feared by Smith (2003: 50). This parallels the Youth Justice Board's obsessive collection of data, however unrefined or imprecise (Pitts, 2003: 41).

Huskins shies away from specifying the values he wishes a programme to promote. This is common in youth work, reflecting the 'dominance of what is correct rather than what is right or good' (Smith, 2003: 49). Although, at the same time Huskins aims for young people to take more responsibility for their own development and for others. Huskins's work is not directly supported by research which shows that if one pursues youth work in the way he proposes it will achieve the specific outcomes he predicts, although he has planned a practical evaluation (personal communication).

The contribution of adventure education: understanding crime, or crime prevention, as promoting personal growth directed by values

Rather than taking as its starting point an identification of the factors which predispose an individual towards crime, this approach starts from a general understanding of the personal development of young people, drawing on the evidence of benefits of both crime reduction programmes and personal development programmes. It combines theoretical understandings of the process of adventure education with the evidence of case study participants from crime reduction programmes (Nichols, 2000a).

The focal point of this model is the participant's definition and redefinition of self-identity. This has been identified by Hendry (1993: 31-57) as the major task facing adolescents and for Giddens (1991) as the major concern for everybody as a consequence of having to cope with greater uncertainty in our lives. (Giddens's case is contentious as he gives no evidence for an increase in uncertainty, and it can be argued that in many respects life in western society offers less uncertainties and risk than it did 100 years ago.) Changed self-concept has also been identified as important in research into those that desist from offending by Graham and Bowling (1995) and Maruna (2001). Graham and Bowling's research found that desistance from crime involved a reappraisal of personal value systems.

The focus on changed self-concept makes theoretical work in understanding the process of adventure education relevant because the focus of adventure education is the personal growth of the individual, especially young people (Hopkins and Putnam, 1993). It is mainly directed towards young people, as it is believed they are at a particularly formative stage of development, but this does not preclude the approach being applied to adults. Although much of this theory has been developed with reference to programmes using outdoor activities with high levels of perceived risk, a more useful understanding of 'adventure' is as taking risks in self-concept. The model proposes that self-development is facilitated by parallel increases in self-esteem, locus of control, and cognitive skills, influenced, or directed by values. These together enable the individual to become more pro-active. In programmes which aim to reduce crime, an increase in pro-activity and pro-social values will be especially important in situations where individuals are subject to a high level of risk factors. Many previous studies have identified a positive impact of programmes as an increase in self-esteem (Nichols, 1997). This was one of the benefits identified from the evaluation of the Solent Sports Counselling project (Sports Council Research Unit, North West, 1990) and West Yorkshire Sports Counselling (Nichols and Taylor, 1996). Self-esteem can be seen as critical in enabling development of self-image to occur through empowerment. However, more recently, the concept has been criticised by Emler (2001) as being imprecise and having no necessary relationship to reductions in offending: promoting self-esteem could just develop more confident criminals.

The most complete theoretical model of adventure education is provided by a synthesis of the ideas of Priest (1991: 157), Priest and Gass (1997:122), Mortlock (1984), Hopkins and Putnam (1993) and Csikszentmihalyi (1992, 1991); summarised in diagram one.

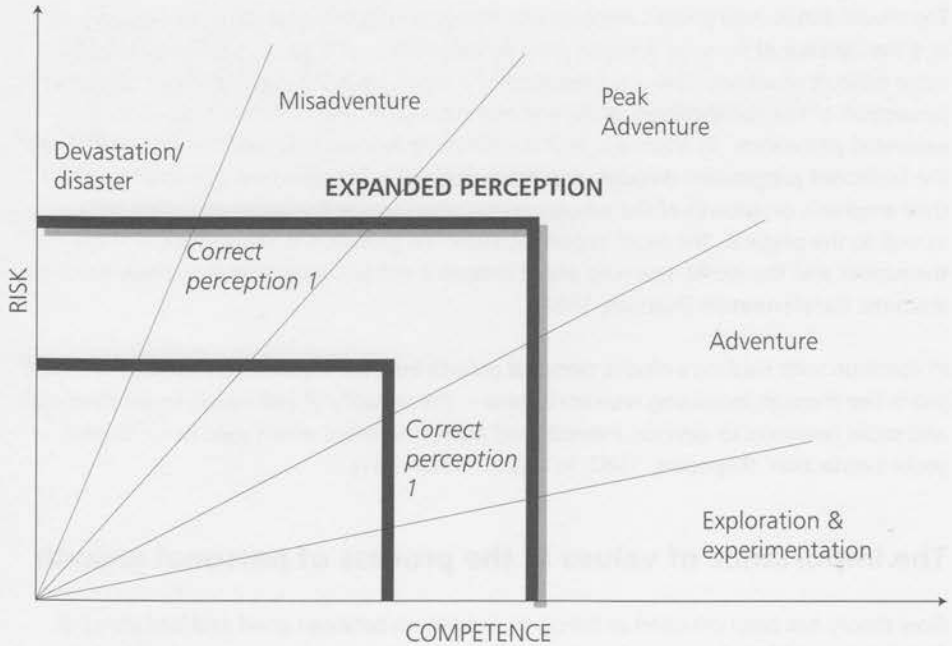

Diagram one, personal growth through adventure

This diagram is an extension of Priest's (1991) model which showed the subjective perceptions of the juxtaposition of risk and competence experienced by a participant in an outdoor activity programme. The relation between the two is situation specific: for example, someone may feel competent canoeing on a gently moving river, but not on a rapid. Priest was merely concerned with helping an individual to obtain a more realistic perception of their own capabilities, in terms of technical skills. In this, the task of the facilitator was to either show where the participant underestimated what they could achieve, or overestimated it. In contrast to diagram one, Priest was just concerned to move an individual's perception of their risk / competence balance from an 'incorrect' to a 'correct' one.

The categories of experience (adventure, mis-adventure, etc.) are adaptations of those devised by Mortlock (1984) representing situations in which the individual feels progressively less in control. The category of 'peak adventure' is similar to Csikszentmihalyi's notion of flow (1992). Flow is a state of mind in which there is a merging of action and awareness, and concentration is complete. The individual is completely engaged in the activity. For Csikszentmihalyi, '...anything one does can become rewarding if the activity is structured right and if one's skills are matched with the challenges of the action' (1992: xiii). As in Priest's model, 'whether one is in flow or not depends entirely on one's perception of what the challenges and skills are' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992: 50). Csikszentmihalyi believed that flow, and learning to achieve it, was important because in an ever more complex life, flow experiences could give people a sense of control. It is important in describing leisure activities that are rewarding. It is possible that through experiencing flow in leisure individuals may learn to structure their everyday lives in a way that will create opportunities for flow.

The model above incorporates Hopkins and Putnams'(1993) objective of personal growth and the concept of flow, by showing how an individual could grow in ability to take on more difficult situations. This is represented by a move from the initial 'correct' subjective perception of the juxtaposition of risk and competence (Priest's original model), to the expanded perception. As Mortlock, and Hopkins and Putnam believed; this occurs through the facilitated progression through ever more demanding experiences. Consistent with their emphasis on growth of the whole person, risks include the social and the emotional as well as the physical. The most important aspect of growth is in the individual's view of themselves and the world. Learning about oneself is not just incremental but may involve a dramatic transformation (Putnam, 1985).

In common with Huskins's model, personal growth enables the individual to become more pro-active through increasing resourcefulness – 'the capacity of individuals to use their own and social resources to develop interests and pursue activities which yield personal and social satisfaction' (Rapoport, 1982, in *Glyptis*, 1989: 161).

The importance of values in the process of personal growth

Flow theory has been criticised as failing to distinguish between good and bad states of flow (Mason, 1999). For example; it would fail to distinguish between people involved in crime or sport, although sport itself has been criticised as having no inherent pro-social characteristics (Critcher, 2000: Jupp and Barron, 1999). Secondly, its attainment is confined to the satisfaction of needs. 'There is nothing in flow theory which enables one to articulate the ethical ideal of attention to values which are separate from, or transcend, the satisfaction of needs' (Mason, 1999: 236). The criticism of sport as being just as likely to promote anti as pro-social values could apply to any other activity used as part of a programme's content.

Thus, a crucial component of personal growth is the values that underpin it and give it direction (Nichols, 2000c). This emphasises the importance of the values of programme staff, as role models and mentors: influential in directing personal growth. This was apparent in the author's evaluation of a sports counselling programme (Nichols & Taylor, 1996: Nichols, 1999a), in research into programmes run by UK Probation Services (Taylor, et al, 1999: 42), and Collins's conclusion on an evaluation of Hampshire Sports Counselling: 'its most important aspect for participants was the support of the sports counsellor, more important than the actual activities offered for three-quarters of them.' (Collins, 2003: 186). In the survey of probation service programmes (Taylor et al, 1999) managers consistently reported that high quality staff were essential, and in assessing the quality of staff they put much more emphasis on the values they portrayed than technical skills.

Applications and examples of the personal growth directed by values model

As in the risk/protection factor model, and that of Huskins, this is a general model of personal development. It can encompass both programmes which aim to reduce crime

through facilitating a changed self-concept in offenders, and programmes which aim to contribute to the pro-social development of individuals who are subject to a high level of risk factors. It is more sophisticated than the risk/protection factor model because it can understand a dynamic process; the interaction between participant and programme. It shows how a sports leader, or mentor can guide a participant through more challenging experiences. As the participant grows in self-esteem, locus of control and cognitive skills, they have the personal resources to take on more challenging experiences, and an increasingly pro-active approach to seeking them out. However, this growth has to be directed, and similarly to Catalano and Hawkins's (1996) model, this is achieved through the value systems of significant others; mentors, sports leaders, peers and 'social units'. The model matches Smith's aspirations for youth work: 'having a vision of what might be possible, and looking to what is good rather than correct, allows youth workers to engage authentically as people with others' (Smith, 2003:54).

This process of growth and change in self-definition directed by values is illustrated by case studies from programmes designed to reduce crime. Mike was a participant on the West Yorkshire sports Counselling Programme (Nichols, 1999a). To paraphrase his words, he felt that the major effect of WYSC had been to motivate him to do things, to become more proactive in taking charge of his life. He saw crime as addictive.

> *To get out of it you have to first get away from friends who are committing crimes and then move to a new area. When you have little money it is very tempting to commit crime when you see friends walking down the road with new clothes and things they have got as a result of crime the previous night. Once you have got into crime you realise how easy it is. So it is hard to break out of it.*

This participant had attended four courses in sports leadership following the sports counselling programme. At first he did not feel confident enough to attend these without the support of the sports leader but these led to voluntary work in a youth club. From this he had taken basic training in youth work and was planning to take further training to become a qualified youth worker, with the support of the full-time worker at his club. This particular case study illustrates the effect of the combination of increased self-esteem, the positive role model of the sports leader, new peers and new opportunities. It illustrates the cumulative effect of these in that his self-confidence had to be built up gradually until he was able to take training opportunities and become involved in voluntary work by himself. Mike had become both motivated and empowered to take charge of his own development. New peers were important in changing the norms of behaviour and value judgments that became integral to his new sense of self-identity. Thus the programme had offered Mike more than just the opportunity to take part in sporting activity.

A further example is from a study of participants on an outdoor adventure programme (Nichols, 1999b). This participant had become a drug rehabilitation worker, however, in the past he had been heavily involved in drug dealing and then become addicted. This led to a cycle of addiction and crime. During the course of a nine month drug rehabilitation programme he experienced outdoor pursuits opportunities, but the activity that interested him most was conservation work. As part of his rehabilitation he was able to do voluntary conservation work, and soon after completing the programme was able

to gain employment in conservation work. However, to sustain this new identity, as a conservationist rather than a drug dealer, he had to move away from his old home area. As he reported;

> *I could not tell my friends and associates, 'that is a robin red breast there, and that does stay here in the winter, and that is a blackbird and that is a song thrush', that just would not have happened, it would not have gone down well, me street cred would have gone, so it was all suppressed, so coming here, people asking me, and what would I like to do personally, and it was like conservation, and it was great, there was no one judging me and saying, I don't like that.*

Although this example does not illustrate so much an increase in self-esteem and cognitive skills, which were already at a fairly high level, it does illustrate how the participant was able to be helped through a progressive set of new opportunities, directed by pro-social values, and which allowed him to sustain a new self identity. Both cases illustrate how as the individuals developed new skills, they were able to become more pro-active in taking advantage of further opportunities. They illustrate the need to understand the dynamic interaction between the participant and the programme, and other life circumstances. One has to understand how the participant changes during the programme, and as a result is able to perceive and take advantage of different opportunities.

Understanding programme effectiveness in terms of helping a participant to redefine themselves can be related to the concept of 'critical choice points' in an individual's 'career' (Craine and Coles, 1995). At these points careers are influenced by key authority figures. Involvement in crime can be understood as a result of incremental choices in response to often difficult circumstances and decisions by key figures in their career path. The sports leaders in WYSC became 'key authority figures', in terms of offering new opportunities to participants, but their influence was the greater for the mutual respect between them and the participant. Thus the sports leader could offer the participant guidance in a way that would not be accepted from a probation officer. For example, a probation officer described the way a sports leader could reproach a probationer with a long history of offences in a way that she would 'not take off anybody else' (Nichols, 1999a).

Maruna (2001), through interviews of long term offenders who had desisted, came to the same conclusion, that desistance can be understood by a redefinition of self. However, in his study the criminal justice system usually reinforced the self-perception as an offender; in the same way as described by Pitts (2003). Likely catalysts for a change were the trust shown by another person, such as a partner or probation officer. Especially significant reinforcers of this change were official recognition. For example: when an ex-offender was supported in a court by the testimony of probation workers and others who testified to his changed character. This again emphasises the key role of a mentor as a significant other.

The personal growth model, illustrated by the previous case studies, implies that a set of 'success factors' will help a programme be successful. These include:

- A clear set of values associated with the activity leaders and the ethos of the programme. These values are inconsistent with offending – to provide a direction to

personal development.

- The ability to adapt a programme to individual participants' needs – such as needs and developing capabilities can be matched sensitively to new challenges, enabling the 'growth' to occur, as represented in diagram one.
- The ability to offer sustained work [18 months – two years] to enable this process to occur, and viable exit routes where the participant can become involved in activity and further opportunities for development and taking responsibility independent of the original programme.
- The use of rewards of achievement, which will enhance self esteem in a way that is recognised by participants.
- A good relationship between participants and activity leaders; leaders taking a mentoring role.
- Sharing activity with pro-social peers -- to reinforce positive values.

In addition the model clarifies the role of 'adventure activities' as a medium rather than as an end in themselves. However, research (Taylor et al, 1999) has found that such activities provide a valuable 'hook' to engage participants.

This model goes beyond the simple countering of risk with protection factors; in the same way that Witt and Crompton (2003: 6), working with crime reduction programmes in the United States, have recently advocated that programmes should move from a simple 'deficit reduction approach'; based on the risk/protection factor model. They feel this has been too limited. They now advocate 'positive youth development', achieved through a set of 'characteristics of environments that promote positive youth development', which are similar to the success factors outlined above. This seeks to 'increase the competency of all youth to meet the challenges of growing up' (Witt and Crompton, 2003: 5); very similar to the approach to youth work advocated by Smith (2003).

An implication of this model is that the redefinition of self-identity consistent with pro-social behaviour, or not offending, will be most difficult, and will involve most personal risk, for those most heavily involved in offending. Both of the case studies used as illustrations above were long term offenders. For work with low risk participants the main concern may be to reinforce a pro-social self-concept rather than to change an anti-social one.

A synthesis, a contribution to practice and a research agenda

Although the risk/protective factor model; Huskins's model of youth work and the personal growth model are developed from different starting points they have considerable points of convergence. The risk/protective factor model is based on the factors which predispose an individual to take part in crime, and the factors which appear to be able to nullify their impact. These need to be provided through the medium of a unit with which the participant identifies and which reinforces pro-social values. Huskins's model defines the social skills which need to be developed in parallel to self-esteem, and a willingness to take responsibility. The personal growth directed by values model is developed from evidence of benefits of participation in sport and outdoor activity programmes and theoretical understandings of this. It defines the outcomes of the process as increases in self-esteem,

locus of control and social skills, directed by pro-social values. As a result of this the young person will become more proactive. It also describes the process through which this occurs. Two models offer a general explanation of the development of both anti and pro-social behaviour and put a strong emphasis on the important influence of value systems of 'significant others'; whether peers, programme leaders, or 'social units'.

The personal growth model shows the mechanisms through which the protective factors and risk factors interact. This model is more detailed than the social development model of Catalano and Hawkins (1996) as it goes beyond this in its understanding of the process of personal growth. This involves the expansion of the individual's subjective perception of their capabilities and the challenges offered by their situation, leading to a more proactive approach to personal circumstances. In terms of social theory, this is a shift from an individual dominated by the influence of social structure, to one who is more freely able to express themselves through social action. An advantage of the personal growth model is that it helps understand how this has to be achieved through the individual sensitively being led through a progression of more challenging experiences, in a manner that accords with Huskins's (1996) model of good practice in youth work.

The personal growth model accords to the 'positive youth development' Smith advocates, in contrast to deficit-based models which focus solely on youth problems (2003: 51). It is not a coincidence that it draws on contributors from some very traditional institutions. Putnam and Mortlock both spent many years delivering programmes in youth movements which tried to achieve personal development through outdoor based adventure. They, and the sports leaders delivering the West Yorkshire Sports counselling programme, would have regarded themselves as teachers following a calling rather than technocrats delivering a set of clearly measurable and accountable outcomes. Flair and integrity had an important role.

The personal growth model helps place programme activities in context as the medium for the process. It helps justify the use of some activities, for example, those used as an initial attraction to help get people involved (Taylor et al, 1999). It also helps put some in perspective; for example; the physical challenge of some outdoor pursuits activities might have been over-emphasised in the past compared to the key challenge of redefinition of self (Nichols, 2000a).

All three models need to take account of economic deprivation as a risk factor. While Farrington's longitudinal research identified economic deprivation as one of the factors that increased the propensity to take part in crime, the risk/protective factors model does not consider how this will be reduced. Neither does the Communities that Care project aim to increase local employment. The Commission on Social Justice (1994: 50.) stated that, 'unemployment does not turn a law-abiding citizen into a criminal. But whatever other factors are at work in rising crime, there now seems to be a clear association between unemployment and crime among young men between the ages of 17 and 25, who account for 70 per cent of all adults convicted or cautioned for a criminal offence'. Therefore a programme is more likely to help a young person stay out of crime if it helps them gain employment, either directly, or through gaining employment skills. Employment might reduce the risk factor of economic deprivation, or it may give the individual a stake in society it is not worth losing (Roberts, 1992). Thus a further long term success factor might

be the ability of the programmes to contribute to employability.

For research, the model opens the 'black box' of the process. The understanding of the changing interaction between the programme and the participant as the participant develops is consistent with the notion of generative causality and the methodology of scientific realism (Pawson and Tilley, 1998). Causality has to be understood as a combination of human agency and its reaction to new opportunities and resources. Rather than the classic experimental paradigm which sets up an experimental and control group, and compares the outcomes; as advocated by criminologists such as Farrington (1998); and consistent with either the risk/protection factor model, or the highly structured approach to youth work; research has to understand how the actor's view of their situation changes. This will allow one to understand why the actor takes advantage of new opportunities as his or her ability to do so increases, or he or she perceives them differently. Research can look at the process as well as the outcomes.

The synthesis of approaches provides a starting point from which to formulate questions. How important are the different components of the process? For example, it has been argued in the context of adventure education, that the pre-occupation with physical risk has obscured the understanding of psychological risk, and personal development as a risk in self-concept (Ringer and Gillis, 1995; Ringer and Spanoghe, 1997; Nichols, 2000b). What can help a young person grow in proactivity? Which activities stimulate and which stultify the process, for different people? How important is the role of a mentor? Recent research in the Fairbridge organisation [which works with disaffected and disadvantaged young people] has found that the mentor role of programme staff is very important (Astbury and Knight, 2003). How much support does a mentor need to offer and when can this be withdrawn? The synthesis of the three approaches above is a starting point for further research.

In conclusion, the theoretical understanding of adventure education is a valuable complement to understandings of youth work focused on young people at risk and of crime reduction programmes. It offer new insights into the process, and thus programme design and evaluation.

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Curriculum Debate:
a letter to Jon Ord

Tony Jeffs

Dear Jon,
I hope you will not be affronted by this public response to your article in the last edition of *Youth and Policy*? You will surely let me know if you are disgruntled with this rejoinder.

I was elated to receive your article. As you will have undoubtedly realised when researching your contribution this journal has been starved of articles on the topic. Academics teaching on Community and Youth Work programmes in British universities have again predictably failed to deliver when they had the opportunity to influence a crucial debate. Practitioners have, as you demonstrate, by way of contrast, been hyper-active. Devoting countless away-days, committee meetings and flip-charts to churning out oodles of curriculum documents. Merrily jumping through the required hoops. But seemingly oblivious of the need to ask if their efforts are worthwhile. Managers (or as is often the case docile consultants) have produced curriculum guidelines and the like by the score. Without one readily at hand it appears you now stand naked before Ofsted. Guaranteed to have your box ticked – failed if you haven't a youth work curriculum. Every youth worker and every youth organisation it seems must now have one. All well and good but have you tried asking a number of fairly obvious questions regarding this flurry of activity? For example what is a youth work curriculum? Or how does a curriculum differ from a programme? Or why after managing for over a century without curriculum and curricula these are all of a sudden *de rigueur*? Or has anyone a scrap of evidence to prove all these curriculum papers, guidelines, documents, directives have enhanced practice one iota? It is worth posing these sort of questions but beware. Asking them frequently generates irritation. At best it will lead to your dismissal as a curmudgeon or worse a fool. However, such enquiries never seem to elucidate a coherent response.

By now you will have guessed your article fell onto my desk like manna from heaven. Offering, as it did, a belated opportunity to kindle a debate in *Youth and Policy* on the youth work curriculum. So, I immediately sent copies to a number of people inviting a response. Obviously Bryan Merton and Tom Wylie, who you specifically take to task, had to be offered a chance to submit a rejoinder. Others were simply asked to react in any way they felt appropriate. Attached are responses from Sue Robertson and Jeremy Brent. Included in the initial trawl were two individuals working for Christian training agencies. Despite following up these requests, for whatever reason, neither replied. A pity but I did my best? Who knows perhaps someone from within that sector may, having read these commentaries, decide to pen a reaction? Hope you will now not mind me exploiting an editor's prerogative by commenting upon your article?

We definitely agree on two points. On the need for considered debate apropos the role and purpose of curricula within youth work. This response is hopefully evidence of that mutual concern. And, although we might quibble over the precise date when discussion regarding a youth work curriculum began in earnest, we are of one mind that the concept took flight following the emergence of the National Curriculum imposed on schools post-1988. That, I suspect, is about the extent of our accord. Now I would like to explain why that is so.

Acquiring a curriculum

First, we do agree about the historical moment when curriculum became a live issue within youth work. It was occasionally discussed before 1988, much as the case for a national curriculum for schools had been (see for example White 1973; Barrow 1984). However it was not until a National Curriculum, or Code to give it its original, and more apposite, nineteenth century title, was re-introduced that people within youth work began to pay it serious attention. Certainly it would be difficult to invalidate the conclusion of Smith, written before the National Curriculum appeared, on this matter, who found that whereas the 'literature of schooling exhibited a longstanding concern with "curriculum" ... that of youth and community work has not' (1988: 137). We can debate all day as to whether the man being chased by a tiger jumped or was knocked over the cliff. Irrespective of whether the tiger reached him or not it definitely caused him to jump. Youth work's sudden affection for a curriculum was akin to that man's impulsive urge to try abseiling without a rope. You are mistaken when you paint a rosy picture of curriculum building as a 'bottom-up' 'democratic' process. Youth workers after 150 years of indifference did not suddenly awake one morning with an insatiable desire to spend valuable time busying themselves creating curricula. They saw a tiger on the horizon and decided not to hang around but to leap. Some, certainly not all, youth work managers and workers predicted that a centralising, right-wing government, determined to curb the autonomy of professionals and the 'unrestrained progressive liberalism of the 1960s' would sooner, rather than later, impose a national curriculum on youth work. Just as it had done on schools. They were possibly correct although they assumed wrongly that it would be the big bad Tories that reined them in, not, as it turned out, a centralising Labour government determined to curb the autonomy of professionals and turn back the progressive tide of the 1960s. We shall never know what would have happened if they had not opted to prematurely jump. What we do know is that the appeasers won the argument. Youth work without being coerced by legislation fell into line. It meekly adopted all the mumbo-jumbo of curriculum, evaluation, proxy-markets and performance indicators that wreaked havoc on the school system (see, for example, Griffith 2000). By the time *Transforming Youth Work*, with its targets and outcomes, hove into view to tidy things up, youth work, without being coerced by legislation, had fallen into line. By then it had incorporated not merely the need for a curriculum but also all the paraphernalia of what Leys (2001) describes as 'market-driven politics' – managerialism, an unspoken acceptance that competition is healthy, a product-driven model of education and a view of young people as customers.

The importance of all this is that consciously or unconsciously the drive to formulate a youth work curriculum, locally and nationally, has been motivated by fear. Fear of what would happen to youth work if it did not have a curriculum. Fear that youth workers would lose

status if, unlike school-teachers, they did not have a curriculum, and attendant objectives to work towards. Fear that without a curriculum youth work would lose its claim to be an educational service. Fear that without a curriculum youth workers would drift ineffectually, devoid of clarity concerning their aims. Fear that if youth workers did not manufacture their own curriculum the government would do it for them. Sadly, as Russell reminds us, nothing 'inspired by fear can further life. Hope, not fear, is the creative principle in human affairs. All that has made man great has sprung from the attempt to secure what is good, not from the struggle to avert what was thought evil' (1916: 116). A brief acquaintance with the bullet-point dominated listings and the formulaic language of youth work curriculum documents confirms these are certainly not inspired by hope. They are products of their time and sadly it shows. Cooked up to meet the expectations, assumed or real, of the inspectorate, politicians and managers – people up the chain of command.

What is the purpose?

Second, I think I understand the rationale behind your spat with Merton and Wylie but from my perspective it all seems rather trivial. Reminiscent of the sort of doctrinal debates bedevilling the world of religion. The type of disputation that turns all believers into sectarians whilst offering endless amusement to atheistic bystanders such as myself. You see, I cannot comprehend why youth work needs a curriculum any more than a house needs wings. Advocating a curriculum for the youth service is not akin to calling for more funding, better qualified staff and a higher profile for the work. For unlike those three, that basically imply the need to improve what youth work does, the former demands a fundamental shift in the nature of the undertaking itself. A curriculum is, I maintain, inappropriate, indeed fundamentally incompatible with what historically youth work has come to represent. Wallace Stevens, the poet, once suggested that 'reality is not what it is. It consists of the many realities which it can be made into'. One sometimes feels that 'curriculum' has been made into 'many realities' and some people are busily making it into something it is not. For that reason it is helpful to go back before going forward. Etymologically curriculum is the course to be run. It has a beginning, middle and end – it clearly has an outcome. Some of the earliest usage, Hamilton (1990) tells us, was found in the Calvinist Leiden and Glasgow Universities where it embraced the concept of ordered learning. It is more than a syllabus, or 'table of headings', the contents covered by a course of teaching. A curriculum is a planned intervention. Someone, politicians, managers or teachers will determine a series of learning objectives to be pursued by the pupil. They then construct means of testing whether those objectives have been met. Finally a process is initiated where using whatever means are judged appropriate by the teacher, manager or politician the pupil is initiated into that knowledge. Wilson sums it up thus:

> *The first condition of application for 'curriculum', then, is that we can use the word only where learning is in question. Second, the learning has to be planned or intentionally organised by the educators: unpredictable or chance-learning-experiences, however valuable, would not count. Third, and more importantly, the learning has to be to some degree sustained or regular, and (I would say as a sighting shot) serious ... Finally 'curriculum' involves the notion of some content which has to be mastered in stages or in some kind of order.* (1977: 66-67)

The content can be reactionary or radical, the learning tested by rigorous examination or vague questioning, attendance voluntary or compulsory. All those matters are important but they need not concern us. Even who determines the content can be set aside, for the moment. What is vital is that we recognise that a curriculum is an ordered and worked out entity. Or as Pring defined it a curriculum 'is a planned way in which we help children learn' (1989: 97). He is mistaken to specify children – for adults can follow a curriculum on a voluntary basis or because a court makes it legally binding. But the error is excusable because almost without exception the literature on curriculum focuses on schools and on children's learning. Of course it can be delivered in places other than a classroom, for example a community centre, barrack room or hillside but that is rarely the case. Why? Because the person delivering it must seek to reduce the possibility that the learners are distracted or that extraneous material intrudes into the learning environment. Also he or she will be anxious to minimise the risk that the pupils will usurp his or her control over the outcomes. Therefore the place of delivery must be a locale the teacher controls and where their selection of what is to be learnt goes unchallenged. Of course what is selected as worth learning and what is discarded as less important and left to the arena of extra-curricular activity, or informal learning, or the media is open to negotiation. However, the choice of what is core knowledge and what is peripheral is highly charged and controversial. Powerful forces battle to control the school curriculum. In England since 1988 the government has taken unto itself the ultimate power to determine what comprises the school curriculum and to a large extent the FE curriculum also.

Logically a school without a set of curriculum relating to different subjects would cease to be a school. It would simply be something else – a nursery, a children's home, a youth centre, or a warehouse for young people. Schools always have and always will have curricula. Also, conflicts will ceaselessly rage over who controls them and what they embody. Youth work has not. That is because it emerged from a different educational tradition. Neither a better nor inferior tradition but an older one for education long pre-dating schools. One based upon voluntary association, debate, dialogue and negotiation. Of course modern youth work has always had a social control component, just as schools since industrialisation have provided a place where young people could be 'dumped' to enable parents to work, the streets made safe and the unemployment figures artificially reduced. Schools as we know embody contradictions. Likewise youth work. However, youth work was always, as much as the school sector, a conduit of learning, a setting where educational experiences were offered. Youth work, from its earliest beginnings, always amounted to much more than a service to manage the leisure time of recalcitrant youth (see Jeffs and Smith, 2002).

Youth workers have never been single subject teachers, nor have they constructed curricula, except for limited and specific purposes. Rather their dominant mode of working was around the concept of the programme, a configuration of activities designed to capture the attention of young people. Activities that were worthwhile in themselves but which were fundamentally offered in order to foster association. Association with each other – this offered opportunities for peer education[1]. Association with adults in order to offer both the

1 Here I am talking of the genuine article, not peer instruction whereby young people are trained to offer a pre-prepared script to other young people in the hope that the message will thereby be made more palatable. Most peer-education projects sadly are really little more than a contemporary makeover of the discredited Victorian monitorial system. The participants being only 'peers' in the limited sense that they are members of the same age grouping.

adult and the young person opportunities to utilise this relationship for educational ends. Through conversation and dialogue each could potentially learn from the other. Of course it was not in every respect an equal relationship (is any?) for the adult usually possesses a greater measure of authority and power plus greater knowledge and maturity. However, unlike the relationship with their school-teacher here the young person can always walk away either because they deem the 'apprenticeship' concluded, they wish to find a better educator or they are unwilling to invest time and energy in the process of learning. Also, unlike the school setting, here young people who opt out are not punished by being denied a qualification that they are told has a 'marketable' value. All these elements have given youth work a unique character and ambience. They have set it apart from schooling and located it within a tradition of autonomous learning that reaches back unbroken to Athens and beyond.

Autonomy does not come without a price. Youth work is a 'risky' enterprise for the worker. First because without the safety net of a curriculum the young person can shape the learning experience, can demand to be taught what the youth worker is not prepared, or expecting, to teach. Second, because it is freed from the constraints of the curriculum it can, indeed often will, involve the elenctic technique of question and answer. Creating encounters that foster uncertainty and ambiguity, stimulate self-questioning for both parties. The curriculum promises a destination, this alternative *modus operandi* merely a quest. Youth work, stripped of its curriculum, offers what some universities and very few schools do, namely, as Steiner put it, an opportunity 'to teach greatly ... to awaken doubts in the pupil, to train for dissent' (2003:102). Once you recognise these exhilarating opportunities and the dangers inherent in them it becomes easy to understand why so many managers and funders fear what youth work, unbridled by a curriculum, might become. And why timid workers seek to wrap themselves in the safety blanket of a curriculum.

Teachers or not?

This brings me to a final point of disagreement. You unambiguously proclaim that 'youth work is not teaching' (p52). This may be an oversight. You may have meant to say 'youth work is not school-teaching'. A statement I would unreservedly endorse. However, just in case it was not an understandable lapse, I wish to respond. Not least because this statement is frequently encountered in discussions with practitioners who often define themselves, in part, by saying 'I am not a teacher'. They and you are wrong. Teachers are to be found operating wherever people gather. For to teach, to be willing to pass on to others our knowledge and experience, is a component of being human. Of course if one picks up a book with *Teacher* in the title it will almost inevitably be about teaching within the context of schools, colleges or universities. It is one of the tragedies of our time that teaching is now overwhelmingly discussed, in academic and general discourse, as a paid activity trapped within classrooms located increasingly within hermetically sealed buildings. This is nonsense. Baloney that needs to be challenged not least by youth workers. Who are also teachers seeking to 'lead people out' to understanding and discernment. Youth workers consciously create and exploit opportunities for others to learn. They intervene to teach. That does not mean they require a curriculum but it does mean they should

not be ashamed of their calling. They teach in the world – wherever young people are. In the world the young people occupy, even partially control. They teach primarily through conversation and by example 'building bridges between concrete, everyday ideas and more abstract, academic concepts, they are fostering critical thinking' (Meyers, 1986: 77). Youth workers can and do act as instructors feeding young people facts and information, as and when it is required they do so, but that is not the essence of their role. They do not merely pass-on the knowledge of others to young people. Good youth workers are active agents constantly seeking to identify and problematise the experiences of young people, to teach by reflecting back those experiences to young people for scrutiny. These are not the sort of teacher Oakeshott (1972) dubbed a 'dancing master'. Rather they come closer to matching his paradigm than those serving up the curriculum pottage in our schools. For Oakeshott teaching is a wide-raging activity wherein:

> *To teach is to bring it about that, somehow, something of worth intended by a teacher is learned, understood and remembered by a learner. Thus, teaching is a variegated activity which may include hinting, suggesting, urging, coaxing, encouraging, guiding, pointing out, conversing, instructing, informing, narrating, lecturing, demonstrating, exercising, testing, examining, criticising, correcting, tutoring, drilling and so on – everything, indeed, which does not belie the engagement to impart an understanding. And learning may be looking, listening, overhearing, reading, receiving suggestions, submitting to guidance, committing to memory, asking questions, discussing, experimenting, practising, taking notes, recording, re-expressing and so on – anything which does not belie the engagement to think and to understand.* (1972: 25–26)

To observe a skilled youth worker 'operating' is to witness someone employing all the dexterity and skill outlined above. But without the sanctions legally gifted the school-teacher. Once you shed the prejudice that the only real teachers are school-teachers and look at the essence of what 'teaching' is it becomes impossible to view the youth worker as anything but a teacher. Albeit one fortunate enough to be operating beyond the classroom.

Conclusion

Curriculum is not a neutral tool. It is not like a white board, a mere teaching aid. For it is selective. 'It defines some groups' knowledge as the most legitimate, as the official knowledge, while other groups' knowledge hardly sees the light of day' (Apple, 1995: 91). Once the youth worker adopts a curriculum, other than in exceptional circumstances, they break with the historical mode of practice that has given them a unique place in the tapestry of education. Like the occupant of the barrel heading for Niagara Falls they find themselves buffeted and tossed every which way but always driven in a direction over which they have no control. Furthermore, as over time the curriculum is refined and the details added and foci adjusted so the potential for them and the young people to control and determine, through dialogue and negotiation, the learning experience will diminish. Like their colleagues in schools the 'experts' will determine the curriculum and the modes of delivery. Others, more powerful than themselves, will inevitably tell them why it is important what youth workers must 'teach' the young. The pressure will gradually escalate until it is irresistible. Then they will be subordinated to the roles of 'curriculum doorkeepers, curriculum customs officers and curriculum security guards' (Hamilton, 1990:45).

The siren call to try the 'curriculum route' is potent, and will become more so during the coming months and years. For some practitioners, especially the lazy, the ill-educated, the uncultured and the nervous, the allure is very likely to prove irresistible. But it must be resisted. Because for youth workers it will become, as it has for school-teachers, a syphonism. Initially bearable, even comfortable, it will ultimately prove to be a self-inflicted punishment, a halter that obliges one to look down, never up or straight-ahead. Far better to strive to maintain whatever autonomy we have and to hold fast to our faith in dialogue, association and emancipation through self-activity. To remain true to the calling of the teacher, for as Steiner reminds us;

> *there is no craft more privileged. To awaken in another human being powers, dreams beyond one's own; to induce in others a love for that which one loves; to make of one's inward present their future: that is a threefold adventure like no other. (2003: 183–184).*

All that remains is to thank you once again for the article and add a bibliography.

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The Youth Work Curriculum:
a response to Jon Ord

Bryan Merton and Tom Wylie

Jon Ord's article in Issue 83 of *Youth and Policy* has three themes. He raises a set of concerns on the use we make of the term 'curriculum' in youth work in our booklet (Merton and Wylie, 2002); he recounts some of the recent history of youth work; and he comments on The National Youth Agency's relationship with government. Our response to his article inevitably reflects our own engagement in policy development in youth work through our roles as HM Inspectors of Education, including successively managing the Inspectorate's youth work team between 1985 and 1994. This involved us in the authorship of various HMI publications including *Effective Youth Work* (DES, 1987) which set out for the first time an Inspectorate view of the educational purpose and methodology of youth work and, later; the Ofsted inspection framework for youth services (Ofsted, 1993a) which Ord praises. Our HMI roles brought us close to how the Department of Education has shaped policy towards the Youth Service over the last 25 years, including the Ministerial Conferences (1989-1992). One of us has been Chief Executive of The National Youth Agency since 1996 and hence closely involved in the development of the government's *Transforming Youth Work* agenda. We have written about some of this history elsewhere (Wylie, 2001; 2004) and do not wish to repeat in detail our version of events.

But two historical matters to which Ord refers require further comment. First, in respect of the ill-fated Ministerial Conferences on a Core Curriculum (1989 – 1992), we regard their titling as something of a distraction. The political problem that the Department of Education was facing, then as now, was the lack of a clear perception in ministerial minds of the purpose and benefits of youth work. Picking up on the then recent introduction of a National Curriculum for schools, the DES used the term 'core curriculum' as an attempt to express the goals and intended outcomes of youth work. One of us has already written elsewhere about the process they adopted:

> *The attempt to produce a consensus across such a wide field of endeavour... and in a form which would be genuinely useful was doomed from the start. It was made worse by the failure to offer clarity about the meaning of the very word 'curriculum' ... The Department's great project was also handicapped by the generally hamfisted management of a series of ministerial conferences by an alliance of DfES officials and the newly-formed, and still mistrusted, NYA ... the result pleased no-one.* (Wylie, 2001)

But we agree with Ord that, whatever the Department originally sought, a deeper benefit was that *'many statutory youth services in the early 90s produced their first attempts at curriculum documents'* (2004, 47). Further that the conferences enabled *'the concept of curriculum to undergo a process of gaining currency and usage in the field of youth work*

... a collaborative and democratic process involving all levels of the profession ... which has enabled ownership to be gained of the concept' (ibid., 48). Indeed, it was immediately following the second of these conferences that HMI conducted and later published a survey of the youth work curriculum (Ofsted, 1993b) as conceived and applied by the youth service in England at the time, drawing on the themes contained within the service's (in?)famous Statement of Purpose.

The second key event is more recent. It concerns the government's *Transforming Youth Work* agenda and its inter-relationship with The NYA. The NYA and its predecessor body, the National Youth Bureau, has always concerned itself with curriculum matters. As Ord notes, John Ewen (NYB Director 1970–1976) wrote about it. But Ord misleadingly cites the second edition of Ewen's work: the original text was published in 1975 which shows that the term 'curriculum' was in use in youth work long before Ord is claiming. The NYA stayed with the curriculum debate down the years and was heavily involved in the Ministerial Conferences and, more recently, in the *Transforming Youth Work* process. Ord implies that The NYA is now following a line specified by government (and, indeed, in a set of ad hominem remarks, that one of us even changed his mind on curriculum as a result of an over-identification with New Labour – this charge is close to being actionable!). Ord writes:

> *Close inspection of the present publications from both The NYA and the DfES gives rise to suspicion and would appear to validate concerns over the autonomy of The NYA and the relationship between The NYA and government policy. There is in fact a near identical match between the government's conception of curriculum in* Transforming Youth Work: Resourcing Excellent Youth Services *(DfES, 2002) and The NYA's chief executive Tom Wylie's conception for curriculum in* Towards a Contemporary Youth Work Curriculum *(Merton and Wylie, 2002) ... The change in policy at The NYA, at least by its principal advocate, Tom Wylie, coincides directly with the election of New Labour and the new agenda of Transforming Youth Work.* (2004, 50-51)

Actually, the truth is the converse of what he implies: the similarity of the texts used by the DfES and The NYA is because the DfES copied material supplied to it by The NYA, not the other way round. Indeed, large elements of the various DfES documents were generated within The NYA (the story of The NYA's policy influence has been told in more detail in (Wylie, 2004).

This brings us to the central thrust of Ord's article, his challenge to our booklet *Towards a Contemporary Curriculum for Youth Work* (2002) which is one of a series of documents published by The National Youth Agency as a contribution to national debate. We welcome Ord's thoughtful contribution to this debate. We take the view that disputes about education *'always reveal the ideological tensions occurring in a society as it struggles to come to terms with changing cultural circumstances and new economic conditions'* (Carr and Harnett, 1996). What is true for societies is also true for services – especially those that serve the young. There is a political imperative for youth work continually to refresh its view of itself and present it better to others. As Ord himself says, *'adopting the concept of curriculum has enabled youth work as a profession to be clearer about what youth work is, both to itself and to the outside world'* (2004, 50). Ord seems happy enough about our use of a relatively standard way of thinking about curriculum construction viz content;

pedagogy; assessment. Indeed, he seems content to go along with what we suggest should be the areas from which 'content' could usefully be derived, for example emotional literacy. He parts company, however, on 'pedagogy' even though we expressly declare (in our para 27) *'youth work deploys a pedagogy which is different to the dominant focus of teaching and learning used in school'*. We go on to assert the importance of experiential learning and educational group work and have already (in our para 19) declared:

> *some of the better youth work is done 'on the wing': that is, it is improvised from the day-to-day situations in which youth workers and young people relate and interact. This is an essential tool of the youth worker's trade.*

How do such statements confirm Ord's proposition that we are *'utilising the term pedagogy to legitimise exclusively the product-based model of youth work and to avoid the concept of process'?*

He further goes on to describe some examples of youth work practice which purport to represent the result of adopting our approach: these are not drawn from our writing but are set up by him as straw figures to be knocked down. If he wants further guidance on the use we make of the term 'educational group work' we commend him to the work of Batten (1967), Button (1971), Klein (1961) and Milson (1973) who long ago influenced our own praxis as youth workers. He makes a similar assault on the notion of 'outcomes', used in this case to mean assessing what young people may have learnt over time as a result of their involvement in youth work. We do not recoil from raising these questions. We think it right to put the learner – not the worker – at the centre. And we draw attention to the need to ensure that any assessment devices are fit for purpose: *'we should resist trying to grade and measure the learning of soft skills in precise terms ...'* (our para. 43). Yes, we do think that youth work is an educational process that seeks the personal and social development of young people. But, we do not think, as he suggests, that what we *'are proposing is a strict application of the outcome model, necessitating specification of individual outcomes for each particular piece of work'* (Ord, 2004: 54). Indeed, we consider that such a mechanistic, routinised approach would be the kiss of death to youth work. We think it would be foolish for youth workers to nail down the outcomes with great specificity of detail they are after through a relationship that entails negotiation, give-and-take, and from which outcomes will emerge hopefully with the thumbprints of the young people clearly visible. But that does not mean that youth workers have no intentions in mind. That they do not enter into a programme or project without some idea of the attitudes, ideas and understanding, they expect the young people to be able to draw on in the process. (Yes, you see, we do recognise the process!). Surely one of the main purposes of youth work is to introduce young people to a broader canvas of ideas, information, imagination and intelligence from which they can choose to develop their own?

We think that youth work needs to be clearer about what constitutes its core goals and methods and we hope our little booklet helps with that. There is a danger that any attempt to conceptualise the curricular tasks of youth work risks misrepresenting its approach and how it deals with the reality of the world of the young and their everyday narratives. There can be a difficulty in connecting with these narratives – and in helping young people to move them on and not be so trapped by their own past or the contours of their local circumstances that they do not fulfil their potential. So, for the avoidance of doubt, let us

re-state briefly the core of what we believe.

Youth work is concerned with the social, personal and political development of young people. It provides this in a social, economic and educational context that does not always help the young to learn or youth work to thrive (Wylie, 2004b). We want to encourage young people to make sense of their physical, moral, social, and political worlds by, for example, recognising the very importance of context. This cannot be achieved by some kind of Fordist curriculum production line with a fixed body of knowledge, skills and intended outcomes. Effective youth work practice is an expression of human artistry deploying both imagination and radical feeling and subscribing to certain values about the learner. It also entails nimble footwork to build on the ebb and flow of young people's interests and enthusiasms.

If it is to win sufficient resource from the public purse, youth work needs to articulate its purposes and methods clearly and it cannot choose the ground on which it has to do so. We think the term ' curriculum' helps with the task of campaigning and communicating youth work's key messages and with the work itself, not least because, for educators, it carries with it such key concepts as relevance, progression and differentiation. But the term does not describe all of youth work: detached work or counselling, for example, are not curriculum. Nor should they lead to accredited learning. A relaxed, *laissez-faire* approach to its pedagogy will not serve either. Good work displays intentionality: an effective youth worker seeks to generate learning, as well as trying to seize opportunities on the wing. As the philosopher, Hannah Arendt put it:

> *education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, not to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something foreseen by no-one, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing the common world.* (Arendt, 1976)

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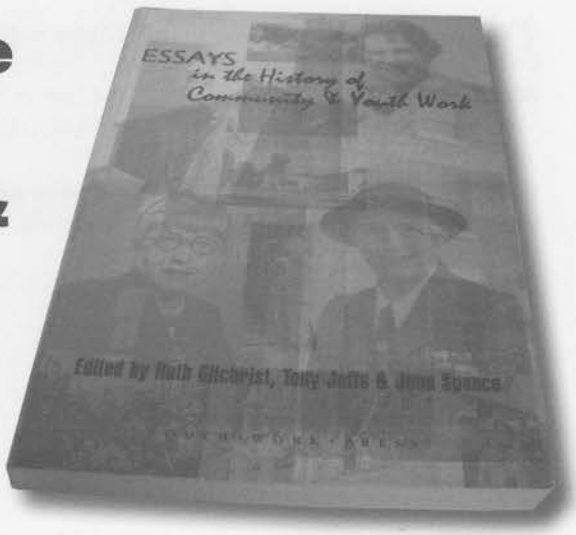
Essays in the History of Community & Youth Work



Edited by Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs & Jean Spence

Any profession that fails to learn from its past is doomed to repeat its mistakes. Community and youth work has made a huge contribution to the wellbeing of communities but, with a few honourable exceptions, it has failed to produce its own histories. By neglecting to record its successes and it failures, it has left itself vulnerable to those who would foist on it warmed-over policies that have been tried and found wanting in the past.

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Communicating what Youth Work Achieves:

the smile and the arch

Jeremy Brent

As youth work becomes more managed and formalised, there is an instinctive reaction amongst youth workers against all ideas of targets, products and outcomes, in the struggle to maintain informal and non-managerial relationships with young people. Unfortunately this reaction can be rather inarticulate. The language of both accreditation and so-called smart outcomes (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timed), with their promises of measurable and completed results, seems to have robbed youth work of its ability to express and explain itself on its own terms and in its own more subtle vocabulary.

However, in rejecting the current managerial vocabulary of an outcome-led approach, there is a danger of denying that good youth work actually does have very powerful achievements. The basis of youth work is the forward movement of young people, in a way that is chosen by young people, and not directed towards externally imposed targets. The process itself is valuable, but we believe in it because it also achieves more. We need to be able to describe this.

There is a constant concern that youth work should be directed towards process, as distinct from products. However, the 'products' of youth work should not be undervalued, as they can be intrinsic to the 'process'. One of the underlying intentions of youth work is to enable young people to do things for real, rather than postpone meaningful action until they reach adulthood. Young people attend youth projects because they enable them to live now, not wait for some deferred future. Youth work can, even should, result in products that are valuable for young people.

These arguments all bear great relevance to what the youth work relationship actually is. Though valuing it, we need to be careful about claims made for this relationship. Too often youth workers claim that their relationship with young people is so special that it provides a complete justification of their work. However, the relationship is full of its own ambiguities and complexities, and we need to be sceptical of any assertions that somehow it is so pure and uncompromised that it is above scrutiny.

To illustrate my arguments, I will give two very recent examples of youth work practice, which demonstrate the importance of outcomes and product to youth work. However, in using these examples, I immediately come up against major problems of claiming 'success' in youth work. Whose success is it, the youth worker's, or the young person's? Can we lay claim to young people's growth and achievements? And then, in writing about young people there is a danger of betrayal; the act of writing turns them into objects of scrutiny, rather than the living subjects we value within the relationship. I was reminded of this

when, taking a break from writing this article, I met my first 'example' in the street. We exchanged cheery greetings, each pleased to see each other – but here she is, transformed into an example of good practice. I hope she can forgive me.

The smile

My first example is deliberately a small, unspectacular, everyday example of youth work. In many ways, it is a paradigm of the youth work process. A 15-year-old girl starts attending the youth centre. She seems to come not in her own right, but as a shadowy appendage of her boyfriend. She looks miserable and unhappy, and takes no part in any of the activities available in a very active centre – no sport, no arts, no discussions, nothing. Staff note her presence, and are friendly and welcoming, but no plans or goals are made for her. Unlike most other professional work with young people, there is no initial interview, assessment procedure, or plan.

Gradually she gets to talk a bit, we find out her name – we'll call her Kelly. Then she starts confiding to one staff member. It is Kelly who chooses to do this – the youth worker does not take it upon himself to 'intervene' with her, though he is ready and able to respond. Over a number of conversations she tells him how miserable she is, how she feels her father dislikes her, how she has not been at school for years, how she wants to move out, how she has eating problems. Problems for which we possess no solutions. We do organise a meeting for her with a housing worker. There is a serious discussion about getting a flat, with all the pitfalls explained, and questions as to whether this was really what she wants. There is no movement at all in getting a different place to live, and the matter seems to drop.

Then, one session after Kelly had been coming to the youth centre for about six months, she smiles. She even smiles at me, though my contact with her has been minimal.

Now Kelly throws herself into the life of the centre. She plans, but does not execute, a display of photos of all the youth club members. She is planning a trip to a theme park for 20 young people. She is active. She is articulate. She enters into social relations with young people and adults. She is part of something. She looks well.

How can we measure this success? There has been no product, no target met, no plan completed, yet all the evidence points to there being a profoundly important personal outcome for Kelly. It is the sort of episode that is the bread and butter of youth work, yet it is nothing we can give a certificate for, nothing to gain public recognition by. There may be outcomes for her in years to come – better relationships, better health, less drugs – but these we do not and can not know. Still, that smile is so important: a real achievement, a triumph of good youth work.

The arch

Over the years, there have been a number of deaths of young people who have attended the youth centre: car and motorbike accidents, drug related deaths, suicides, a collapsed

trench on a building site, cystic fibrosis. Young death is particularly hard to deal with, and deaths that occurred 20 or 30 years ago still bear a great burden of grief. So the idea grew of converting a scrap of land outside the building into a garden of remembrance with, in its centre, some kind of monument.

No one knew how to make such a monument, so we employed a sculptor. He had a wide brief: to design and construct, with young people, something for the garden. He provided scraps of metal, sculpture books, and a computer programme to experiment with designs. After much discussion, a young man whose brother had died on Christmas Day from a drugs cocktail very carefully made a maquette of a double arch, which became the chosen design.

We wanted young people to be involved in the construction, but the main structure of the arch had to be made in a metalwork shop. Young people could not do this, but they were part of this adult process. When the completed frame was delivered, young people were amazed at how the 15cm high model had been turned into a 2.5m monument. The next stage was to embellish it with more steel. The room in which this was done throbbed with activity, as young people cut, shaped and welded metal. The project took on its own energy. When new young people came to the room to demand what was going on, it was not staff or sculptor who explained what was happening, but young people who explained about the deaths, and the purpose of the arch.

The project was very physical. One young man, whom I had seen self-anaesthetised with drink and drugs at the funeral of his brother (killed in a motorbike accident), was dripping sweat as he sawed through chunks of steel to give the arch the fruit of his effort. This was doing something, creating something, not just talking about it. It was the first time that I think he had properly grieved.

The arch, now installed, looks very splendid. People come to visit it, even though the garden around is as yet uncultivated mud.

This has been a powerful piece of youth work. The point of describing it for this article, however, was that it had a product. In fact, it needed a product. The process, the relationships with young people were immensely important – the fact, for example, that the arch was made by them, not just commissioned from the sculptor (and he, who had been unsure of the process, was bowled over by the power and creativity these relationships unleashed). The product did not get in the way of the process, and the project can partly be judged by its product.

The value of the arch far outweighs the value of any accreditation that could have been given to young people for having taken part. In fact, accreditation in this context would have been demeaning. Certificates would have detracted from the importance of the arch as something worth doing for itself, and devalued the emotional depth of its content.

We could surmise the learning outcomes of the young people involved, but that feels almost sacrilegious. They were personal to them. I would not dream of asking them, let alone giving them a questionnaire to fill in. The project had, as so often in youth work,

unrecordable outcomes, outcomes that can not be encompassed by any evaluation form.

Our messy relationship

These examples show the type of successes that can be achieved using a youth work approach, based on a mode of relationship between adult worker and young people. They point to a number of conclusions:

- Youth work is not about delivering to predetermined targets. Both the examples show effective work that did not start off aiming for targets. There was no idea as to what the end result would be, or even, in the first example, that there would be a result at all. We must remember, and tell others, that targets are not necessary for outcomes. In both these cases, the lack of predetermined targets actually allowed powerful unplanned outcomes.
- The lack of targets helps young people themselves learn about creation and transformation. They are not merely following instructions. In the case of the arch, not having a predetermined end result enabled young people to create one for themselves, and in doing so see the process unfold.
- Youth work is active and material as well as discursive and verbal – young people learn about themselves by physical action as much as by talking. The example was arts work, but the same holds for sport.
- Accreditation should not be confused with achievement. Better things can happen than gaining a certificate!
- Youth work is organised and professional. Neither of the examples would have happened without both strong organisation and professional sensitivity. Being untargeted does not mean being disorganised. Running a project in which the end result is not known requires greater organisation and strength than running a predetermined programme. When compared with more mechanistic approaches, youth work can seem to be less precise and organised, but in practice it is flexibility and responsiveness that is valuable. Ironically, to be non-managerial with others takes a much greater depth of management of self.
- Youth work has effects that are valuable both for individual young people and for the public good – for Kelly, for the makers of the arch, but also for wider social relationships.

If, for the sake of argument, we compare these outcomes to the SMART model, we see that they are specific after the event, not measurable (which gives the lie to the fallacy that what is not measurable does not exist), achieved, real, but not completed within a strict time frame. In fact, the outcomes of both these examples have not ended – they will run on through those young people's lives.

Despite these upbeat conclusions, there is a danger of becoming pious about the nature of the youth work relationship, claiming rather romantic attributes of some kind of pure and unmediated understanding between youth workers and young people. These utopian claims are untenable. There have been plenty of thinkers, in philosophy, psychoanalysis, sociology, linguistics, cultural studies and other disciplines, who have argued convincingly against the possibility of having any form of relationship that does not contain within it a relationship of power, the possibility of misrecognition, and the uncertainties of communication. It only

needs a session working with young people to experience all of these complications.

Of course, our relationships with young people are based on the voluntary principle, so distinct from, say, teachers, social workers or youth justice workers, all of whom have statutory powers and responsibilities inherent in their roles. But this voluntarism does not and cannot exempt us from all responsibility and difficulties. As well as these optimistic examples given above, I could have given descriptions of much more difficult relationships with young people, full of conflict and struggle. The relationship that youth workers have with young people around substance use is, for me, a particular problem. Youth work is about young people exploring and making up their own minds, but I have seen too many young people that I have known and liked severely damaged by the substance use that they have chosen. My imperfect work with young people around substance use is a mixture of information, education, providing alternatives, supporting young people who do not want to use them, enforcing prohibition of use on the premises, and care of users – a confusing list which leads to almost irresolvable contradictions in practice. Youth work is messy, ambiguous and complex.

Youth workers are increasingly in the uncomfortable position of being squeezed between a managerialist approach which demands targeted results and certificated outcomes, and our awareness that transferring this type of directive relationship on to the young people we work with would undermine the value of what we do. It is a strain for youth workers to be on the receiving end of one kind of relationship that we do not pass on to others. We are a kind of kink in the chain of command. To counter that pressure, we have to continually articulate, for ourselves and others, why it is that our informal and non-managerial relationships with young people are so valuable. And we have plenty of examples.

Jeremy Brent is Senior Youth and Community Worker in Southmead, Bristol.

The Youth Work Curriculum

Sue Robertson

Writing this piece has brought back some powerful memories of the 'great curriculum debate' of the 1990s. As I have been involved in the youth service since 1979 it is inevitable that personal recollection and reflection will be involved in any discussion of the topic I undertake today. When one looks back at history it is always shaped by one's own interpretation and personal interpretations of past time are often in conflict with the official version (Steedman 1988). I hope that my thoughts can still have a general relevance.

The nature of curriculum has been argued in school teaching as much as in youth work. Lawton (1973) felt there had been a subtle change in writing about curriculum, in the past tending to emphasis the content of a teaching programme, but in 1973 much more likely to be defined in terms of the whole learning situation. It would seem that the pendulum has now swung the other way, with the transmission of specified content, 'curriculum as syllabus' and 'curriculum as outcomes' being the models in schools (Ord 2004, quoting Smith). The National Curriculum introduced by the Conservative government in 1988, ended what one primary school teacher described as the 'dead pigeon ' method of teaching, that is the teacher finds a dead pigeon on the way to school and builds his lessons around it. The children discuss it, draw it, weigh it, measure it and write about it, maybe even photograph it thus learning all sorts of different things. Now lessons are planned to the hour. As a school governor I observed a lesson about shadows. The idea was to put a stick in the playground and watch the shadow move. Unfortunately it was raining, so-the children just did the drawings anyway! The teacher had programmed it in for that day and didn't want to change her lesson plan!

The development of a curriculum in youth work followed chronologically on the National Curriculum for schools; the question is whether it is a different beast. As Ord (2004) points out the youth work 'curriculum' is a relatively recent idea. There is no mention of a 'curriculum in youth work texts such as Davies and Gibson's *The Social Education of the Adolescent* (1967) or Bunt and Gargrave's (1980) *Politics of Youth Clubs*. As a new youth worker in 1979 group work was the dominant concern, especially the Button (1974) model. Programming was encouraged but initiatives such as girls' only work were not defined as a part of a 'curriculum' of youth work. The first I remember hearing about a curriculum was the notion of the 'hidden curriculum' ie, what the youth worker tries to do without telling the young people about it, (they think they are coming in to play pool while workers are trying to get them to address their drug use). This surfaced in 1986 in Cheshire's Youth Service Draft 3 Year strategy for development which also said that;

> *'good practice is needs based and acknowledges that the needs of the young people are best articulated by them' but 'too much programming is demand led and likes based – The Service responds far too often to the wants rather than the expressed or unexpressed needs of young people'.*

My feeling at the time was that there was some contradiction and confusion in this section.

> *What price participation if I know best anyway. What she says she wants isn't really what she needs and what she thinks she needs isn't really what she wants?' I agree we need to offer more than young people might expect but if what we are really here for is building relationships, we must above all listen to what young people are saying.*
>
> (Taken from; Response to Cheshire Youth Service Draft 3 year strategy, Sue Robertson)

I still feel that youth workers are there to listen to young people and not impose our own views of what their lives should be like.

By 1990 Curriculum must have meant something as, when I was appointed as a youth advisor in Croydon, applicants needed the following qualities; *'Understanding and experience of curriculum design and evaluation as it relates to the youth service'.*

If I had had to define curriculum then I would probably have talked about process based on the model of the Soda Glass, consisting of micro learning cycles as the bubbles, described by the Further Education Unit, which had been recently published. The FEU curriculum research project was set up by the North West Regional Youth Service Unit. They felt that;

> *following the 1988 Education Reform Act, it is essential that the Youth Service is able to defend successfully its existing role and mark out clearly its contribution to work with young people within the education service and with other agencies.* (Newman and Ingram 1989: vii)

The report saw curriculum as an organic process – the offering and acceptance of learning. This does seem to imply that youth workers are deciding what young people should learn, rather than facilitating situations for them to learn from each other. When the National Curriculum for the Youth Service was proposed it was not greeted with delight by many. *The Times Educational Supplement* noted that it sounded like a ' bizarre extension of Whitehall rule, conjuring images of totalitarian regimes' (*TES* 8.12.89). They noted that youth workers, whom they described as the guerrillas of the education system were not noted for their readiness to take orders. This was probably one of the reasons why I went into youth work, and why I was against a national curriculum. Would youth workers still be described in that way?

Following the National Curriculum Conferences youth services developed with curriculum documents. Ord (2004) suggests that this was a *'collaborative and dynamic process involving all levels of the profession ... a "bottom up" process which has enabled ownership to be gained of the concept.* I feel this is an exaggeration. Certainly in Croydon there were clear divisions regarding the relevance and practicality of a curriculum and attendance at the curriculum working party which was set up was spasmodic. Many workers were like the one described in the *Big Red Book of the Curriculum* (Nightshift 1992) – confused and panicky.

These exercises took place all over the country and most services developed statements on curriculum which were about empowerment, equal opportunities and participation. Unfortunately, the government then wanted us to measure our work, the Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte report (1991) which followed the Ministerial Conferences was concerned with the establishment of performance indicators. There was an idea prevalent that youth work was not sufficiently recognised because it had failed to make its case. This was coupled with a feeling that if we don't get our own house in order they'll do it for us, or even, if we don't come up with the goods we'll cease to exist.

Anne Foreman, writing in 1990, felt that *'The ambivalence of some youth workers towards the term curriculum, and the lack of an agreed acceptable alternative, has kept youth work in the wings'*. In 1996, in *Quality Youth Work with Young People* Huskins set out a Curriculum Development Model. He suggested that *'Nationally, over recent years, the Youth Service, ... has failed to convince central and local government that it has a vital place in the overall educational provision for young people'* (1996: viii). The thinking seemed to be that if only we could describe what we do better then we would have had resources thrown at us. For instance, the Director of The NYA, Janet Paraskeva stated that the national curriculum would *'put the service further up the educational agenda and demonstrate the need for proper resourcing'* (Davies 1999). There had been severe cuts in local authority expenditure throughout the 80s and 90s. However, in my view, the funding cuts experienced by the youth service were not because we couldn't describe what we did, or because what we did was bad, but because the government was cutting public expenditure to the bone and the youth service, with no statutory minimum proscribed, did not even have a bone to be cut back to! From the early 1990s youth services started describing its work in ways that it thought the government and local authorities wanted to hear, ie in terms of a curriculum, learning outcomes, performance indicators and accredited achievements in the vain hope that 'they' would give us more money. This gave face-to-face workers the impression that what they did was not appreciated, and managers were often too busy devising performance indicators to visit projects or meet workers for supervision. Many youth services started appointing team leaders and senior workers to relieve managers who were so overloaded with meetings and paper work, and workers carried on feeling unappreciated while trying to get their heads round the idea of curriculum, and trying to keep the roof in the youth club from falling down due to lack of maintenance.

The introduction of a curriculum led also, I feel, to a decline in new forms of practice such as girls' work. The introduction of a curriculum came when girls' work was perhaps at its zenith. My post in Croydon started in 1990 and I had an explicit brief to develop girls' work. This development, however, found itself overtaken by imperatives of curriculum, and a move towards a service concerned with measuring and indicators. The style of youth work, which was fighting its corner nationwide, with varying degrees of success, in the 1980s, was a democratic and empowering way of working through conversation and small group work, above all emphasising the importance of the collective. What the curriculum debate was about was a more structured and monitored, individual approach, for example to record young people's involvement and document factual information about them (Williamson 1990). My main issue with the curriculum in youth work is that it has trapped us into a concentration on being 'educational' and prescribing outcomes. Youth workers do not see young people as empty jugs into which knowledge is poured. Youth work is about building

and maintaining relationships as the purpose of the work, not its by-product. The relationships that young people make with each other in a youth project are just as important as the relationship they make with a worker and it is the workers job to ensure this process. Today, this is often disregarded and everywhere youth workers describe how targets and outcomes are taking over their work. This can make it difficult to accept young people as who they are rather than who 'the government' wants them to be. While I am not denying that youth work is educational in the broadest sense, by constantly using this educational term we lay ourselves open to being asked to assess and evaluate and have learning outcomes, as the school and HE curriculums do. In fact, that is how Alan Howarth defined the curriculum he asked the youth service to formulate in 1990, 'by curriculum I mean not the aims of the youth service ... nor the detailed activities or methods of delivery but the outcomes which you as planners design your services to achieve' (Howarth 1990).

Nowadays, as Jeffs and Smith (2002) point out, schoolteachers spend a great deal of time demonstrating they have met the curriculum, keeping lesson plans etc. Jeffs and Smith feel this has meant a decline in the time teachers spend building relationships and developing extra curricular activities. This has also happened in youth work. When I was first in youth work administration this was something you fitted in round the work with young people. Many workers now seem to do the opposite. Youth workers are now asked to plan sessions in advance and accredit young peoples learning, but surely the essence of good youth work must be our ability to adapt to the situation and create learning experiences wherever we are. A youth club that sticks to delivering a drugs workshop on a Tuesday night when young people have arrived upset because they have been excluded from school, or arrived excited because they are off to a party, will soon be a club that no one goes to. The whole idea of informal education is that it is informal, and it can't always be planned. It is not the role of the youth worker to decide which of many outcomes that occur is desirable; it is rather to provide the relationship and the opportunities through which young people develop knowledge, skills and abilities. There is nothing wrong, in fact there is a great deal of good, in young people doing something because it is fun now rather than because it will bring them some credits for the future. Writing a piece for *The Times* in 1990 Anderson said that youth workers saw their main job as offering: *'a space apart for the young themselves, an area where their desires come first and where their present needs take priority over preparation for their futures'*. It seems the youth service is no longer so clear about this. We are, or should be, a voluntary service. After all, young people choose us after a hard day at school, in their leisure time. One of the problems of the service today, described by Bradford, is that there are actually several very different types of provision calling themselves 'youth work'. Bradford feels it is an ambiguous practice 'infinitely fluid, flexible and mobile' (2004: 246). The youth service curriculum tries to cover it all and it might be better to declare that some of this work isn't youth work, and let someone else have the money. There is mentoring work, work in schools, youth justice work, counselling, personal advising work to be done, but why do youth workers have to do it? The problem with the term curriculum in my view is not that Wylie and Merton (2002) have changed it but that workers got taken in by it. Somehow we thought it would make us important, like teachers! We forgot that it was our credibility with young people that was important, not our credibility with other professionals or politicians. Or can we keep both? I would argue for a return to first principles, voluntary participation, association and fun, and let those who want to teach have a curriculum.

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Review Article

Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs, and Jean Spence (eds)
Architects of Change – Studies in the History of Community and Youth Work
The National Youth Agency, 2003
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Ted Milburn

On a bright sunny day in October 2003 I was visiting the Commonwealth War Graves Memorial in Etaples Cemetery in Northern France with a group of four friends who served with me as national servicemen in the Green Howards Regiment from 1957–59. We were seeking the grave of an uncle of one of my friends. Having spread out to search row upon row of gravestones, one of my pals called out to me that he had found the grave of a Betty Stevenson that bore the YMCA insignia. He remembered that I had many years ago worked with the YMCA as a youth worker. Betty had been a volunteer worker, who served with the YMCA and was killed in France during the First World War – one of only a few civilians buried and commemorated in the cemetery.

This chance finding linked me in memory to an excellent seminar given by Ruth Gilchrist on the work and life of Betty Stevenson that I had attended. It had been part of the second History of Community and Youth Work Conference held at Ushaw College, Durham in February 2001. Approximately half of the chapters of this book were initially presented as papers at that conference – a truly reflective, challenging and intellectually stimulating experience. It is a pleasure to see these and other papers worked into articles and featuring in this book which expresses and celebrates our interest and concern to explore the history of community and youth work; a book that pays attention to the importance of understanding of the ways in which early practice has helped to shape the development of our work today.

In an excellent and effective introduction, the editors highlight the contribution that the writers of the chapters make to our understanding of the lives of ordinary people over time. The editors acknowledge the importance and the significance of the 'everyday' in our understanding of people, especially as their experiences of war, famine, degradation of the environment, exploitation, powerlessness and homelessness are part of the landscape in which community and youth work is located. Yet it has often been within the 'grand narratives' of history – the creation of nations and empires, advances in science and technology and the universalisation of human values and culture – where historical curiosity has been located. There is a feel in this book that theoretical and political perspectives are appropriately understood and acknowledged, but that the experience of ordinary people is paramount.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the significance of the everyday is taken in the book to suggest that such historical insights are domestic, parochial and narrow. Each of the

chapters present a focus on relevant community and youth work topics which reflect the enthusiasms and interest of the authors, but in particular, the articles offer an analytical and theoretical debate, setting the specific historical analysis within larger societal movements and development.

This is especially noticeable within the five chapters that focus on women and community and youth work – youth work and feminist activism (Janet Batsleer); women's institutes and social action (Anne Stamper); women's settlements in London (Ellen Ross); the *Girl's Own Paper* and social welfare (Jean Spence); and community work and the state (Mae Shaw). Similarly, youth work in post-war Berlin can only be properly understood by reading Gerd Doerry's interesting analysis of what it was like to live in immediate post war Germany and how the policies of the Allies impinged upon youth work aims and community living. John Rose and Bert Jones, writing of the Youth Service in Wales 1918–1939, give a sense of life in that principality during those years which the reader can almost 'taste' through their exploration of the way in which youth work was developed within acutely deprived communities. Keith Cranwell's chapter on Sunday Schools, Treats, Day Trips and Country Holidays in London (1880–1920) is a fascinating study of how the Church, and subsequently education authorities, saw the growing importance of increased leisure time contact with young people as a means of influencing their beliefs and behaviours. I was surprised to find the article by Keith Popple on the history of the *Community Development Journal* in that at first I wondered about its appropriateness in this kind of book. In reading it, however, one is impressed by the way in which the author has charted the shifts in mood and direction which have inhabited community work during the life of this journal and how these have reflected changes of personnel, contribution and perspective in the journal. It fits here most certainly.

One of the exciting and intriguing features of the earlier *Essays on the History of Community and Youth Work*, produced by the same editors and reviewed in this Journal (Issue 73, Autumn 2001), was the focus upon what I called the 'grand old men and women of community and youth work'. I am pleased to say that this has continued in this book, with revealing and interesting insights into the world of social pioneers. The critique of the radical educator R. F. Mackenzie by Kate Phillip and the splendid account of the work of Basil Henriques and the 'House of Friendship' by Tony Jeffs both take us into a deeper understanding of the social, political, educational and in some senses, spiritual, contexts within which their work was set – bringing for us an informed explanation of their importance, and sometimes 'troubled' experience, as seminal figures.

I had read about Frank Caws (and the deliciously named Sunderland Waifs' Rescue Agency and Street Vendors' Club) in Jean Spence's contribution to the earlier book mentioned above. Her chapter on his development of work with boys in Sunderland in this publication carries her trademark of meticulous and detailed analyses of primary sources and critical analysis and argument. Although I would not personally say that Frank Caws was a seminal figure in the mould of Henriques or Mackenzie, he was an enormously influential and seriously committed creator of significant youth organisations, some of which have continued to this day in Sunderland. Frank gave a lifetime of service to the church, Lambton Street Boys' Club, the YMCA and The Waifs' Rescue Agency.

The essays that comprise this book draw upon a range of perspectives – the personal, group, organisational and socio-political – giving a richness and variety of subject, analysis, writing style and debate. There are interesting excursions into concepts and methods of work which hold less currency for some in the world of community and youth work today ('membership', 'service', 'welfare' and building based 'programmes') and writers explore their value – offering challenging comparisons with current practice. I have found the exploration of beliefs, value bases and the influence of social mores on ideas the most exciting part of the history that is critically examined.

This can be observed most clearly in the respect Tony Jeffs expresses for Basil Henriques, an individual whose name and example was often cited by tutors on the YMCA training course for Youth Workers I attended in London in 1960. Jeffs helps us to see that the concern to offer association and friendship was at the heart of Henriques' work in East London, believing as he did that a good club should be a 'home of friendship'. As Jeffs points out, it is difficult to imagine a higher aspiration for youth work than the creation of such places – and many would also agree with his belief that such places should be a 'cultural school and a spiritual home' (p157). An individual of great vision and innovation, deeply embedded in the settlement movement, Henriques ran a vast organisation over many years that combined youth work and community development. Wide and varied programmes; summer camps; a health centre; educational and cultural opportunities – all were available to members. Most of all he was available, accessible, loved and respected. Jeffs tells all of this in graphic and interesting detail in a fascinating chapter which is as equally as good as the splendid lecture he gave on Henriques at the Ushaw Hall Conference!

Kate Phillip in her chapter on R F Mackenzie asks 'why should the work of a head teacher who worked primarily in formal education in the Scotland of the '60s be of interest to youth and community workers in the current context – and beyond Scotland?' (p191). She answers this by providing an account of his work and ideas and demonstrating how he raised fundamental and important questions about education beyond the classroom. At the centre of these questions are the issues of social inclusion, education and citizenship – and although I suspect Phillip did not intend this, there are also major questions raised about schooling and teacher behaviour. Attempting to put the principles of free schooling into practice in state schools in Scotland, Mackenzie, and Summerhill, his school, ran into the negative reactions – and subsequent sanctions – of politicians, education officials, parents and some (but not all) teachers. He viewed school based learning as fragmented and distanced from the realities of young people's experience and their social context. Propped up by an examinations system that perpetuated existing inequalities, schooling was designed to maintain the power of the elite who designed it. Does he sound like a youth and community worker to you? Phillip is right to claim him as an educator of the 21st century – and you will enjoy this interesting, but sad and chastening chapter.

What a good writer Mae Shaw is! Her chapter on Community, Community Work and the State is an article to chew on. This is a well constructed and critically reflective chapter based upon a sound theoretical examination of key concepts and community work principles. At the heart is Shaw's invitation to revisit, or rather revive, the radical tradition of community work which sought to address the 'interests and aspirations of ordinary people, in spite, rather than because, of the demands of professional community' (p215). She does this by

discussing community work in history; examining beliefs about inequalities; challenging definitions of need; and the role of community work in making or managing change. By so doing she explores the durability of the discourses of deficiency across differing political and ideological cultures and highlights the need for community workers to test boundaries and encourage oppositional voices.

One of the strengths of this book is the way that it juxtaposes chapters that analyse relatively modern texts and ideas about community, ideologies and power, such as Shaw above, with the examination of those that explore the ideologies of those who wrote popular papers over a century ago that helped form and mould the ideas of groups of young people or communities – often from a religious perspective. Spence's second chapter, The *Girls' Own Paper* and Social Welfare (1880–1908), is a splendid and revealing example of the ways in which The *Girls' Own Paper* (GOP) supported the view that young women should see their main purpose and role in life to be to care for others and to set aside their needs and desires when these got in the way of opportunities to care. Amongst other things, it represented social welfare work as an appropriate activity for girls and young women, as something that offered excellent opportunities for sacrifice and required personal commitment in order to withstand the many obstacles and difficulties such work presented. Spence shows that the *GOP* was influential in setting out the possibilities and limits of respectable activity for women, but throws doubt upon whether it was a dominant force in shaping the relationship between femininity and social work in its earliest phases. The analysis she applies to her research is painstaking and compelling.

The chapter by Spence on the *GOP* along with three others, individually written by Batsleer, Ross and Stamper, take a view of their subject from the vantage point of women's history and the perspective of women's activism in a range of social and cultural contexts. Individually and collectively they make an impressive contribution to the literature – and in addition, they are so interesting! In A 'Lost' Generation: Women's Settlements in London between the Wars, Ross acknowledges that, despite the bustling and active nature of these houses in the 1920s and 30s, they were not attracting the political attention they did prior to 1914. Their role as centres for independent and inspired reformers before 1914 had changed by the 1920s. But Ross shows the continuity in their history, charts their immense contribution, and indicates the ways in which cultural changes in the early 20th century reconfigured the terms through which they related to the seriously disadvantaged in local communities.

Women's friendship networks in Manchester are the focus for Batsleer's chapter in which she focuses on the ways in which these groupings sustained the work of the Women's Movement in Manchester at the turn of the century. Often associated with the university and Owen's College, women met and developed friendships, sometimes within membership of the University Settlement. These were nurtured through women's involvement in the emerging clubs and associations – and in youth work. Friendship is defined in terms of women's mutual activity in social action and growing interpersonal bonds of affection. The activities of the women whose history Batsleer is presenting was clearly linked to campaigns to secure the vote, obtain fair treatment for women in the labour market and the achievement of new forms of support and welfare. The force of this double commitment – to the community and to each other – is sensitively and carefully explored through the

experiences of two key women activists of that time. By so doing, Batsleer makes strong links between the personal, social and political and draws some real connections between the early years of girls' work and the wider Women's Movement in Manchester.

The importance and value of voluntary organisations and voluntarism is frequently noted in this book. Many of the case studies presented, relate to well known organisations whose names we recognise – in which your mother, grandma or Aunt Mary might have been a member. The Women's Institute (WI) is one – and the danger lies in that fact that we believe that we know all about it, and what it stands for. Anne Stamper's chapter is revealing in this respect as it shows the political and social role of the movement and how it has acted as a vehicle for civic participation. She focuses upon the period 1915–1925 and considers the ways in which many women living in rural areas of Britain at that time gained an opportunity for active citizenship through the WI. With one minor but notable exception in the interesting list of 'Areas of Concern of WIs in 1925', Stamper shows how close WI agendas were to major community work preoccupations today – Youth Work; concern for the countryside; cooperative purchase; health; village amenities and services; war veterans and memorials; women in public life; work for 'less fortunate' and children (p95). I found this chapter informative and revealing – broadening my own understanding of the WI.

As a student on the YMCA course I had been aware of the war work of that movement but confess to have thought little about the way that it impacted, except in general imagination, upon the lives of individual YMCA workers. So the chapter by Gilchrist on Betty Stevenson is not only an insightful journey into the life of a volunteer working in extreme conditions – from her letters, those of her family, Betty's journal, army reports, contextual army bulletins and YMCA directives. It is also a fascinating social and political analysis of how the war impacted upon young people, the social position of young women, and the concept of service. Betty had more than one war in her life – in order to serve, she also had to argue against the attitudes and views of her parents, then the views of army top brass, and the YMCA which at first considered her to be too young to volunteer for this work. Gilchrist gives us many glimpses of Betty's warm personality and life; her boundless optimism; her opinions as a middle class volunteer; the privations of service in a war zone – and her hopefulness. At the same time, we are also encouraged to set these insights against the role which women went on to play in the YMCA following WW1.

You will by now have guessed that I have truly enjoyed this book and find within it a number of articles that will need to be revisited. The contributions are well written and add considerably to our knowledge of the developments and conditions that fashioned our work, methodologies and approaches in the field of youth and community work. As with the previous published work of this editorial team their opening, scene setting, chapter in this book is superb – analytical, grounded but quite inspirational.

All contributors to the book have supported their writing with excellent bibliographies, containing precious references to primary and secondary source material. As a book of reference for students of community and youth work I warmly recommend it – but also commend it as a further milestone in our journey as a profession seeking critical reflection and the creation of our own historiography. It is the creation of this historiography that is at the heart of the project Gilchrist, Jeffs and Spence are engaged upon. They are to be

congratulated and encouraged for their work and enthusiasm in attempting to achieve this aim.

Oh, by the way, Betty Stevenson was killed in an air raid on active service in France, shortly after her 21st birthday and was posthumously awarded the Croix de Guerre avec palme.

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Classic Text

Lily Montagu
My Club and I: The Story of the West Central Jewish Club
London: Neville Spearman 1941(reprinted London: Herbert Joseph 1953)

Jean Spence

Towards the end of *My Club and I*, Lily Montagu dedicates a chapter to *Red Letter Days* where she remembers special events and the ceremonials marking anniversaries in the history of the organisation she founded as the West Central Jewish Girls' Club in 1893. These included club holidays, outings, royal visits and the annual club birthday celebrations. A particularly poignant memory was the 1913 Consecration and opening of a new club building in Alfred Place designed by her friend, the architect Herbert Joseph. This building, paid for by subscription, donations and an inheritance left to Montagu and her sister Marian, was destroyed in the Blitz with the loss of 27 lives. When she began writing *My Club and I* in 1940, Montagu had been undoubtedly looking forward to another 'Red Letter Day' marked by its publication – the club's Golden Jubilee and possibly her retirement (p137).

Instead of retiring, the 68-year-old was prompted by the devastating loss to renew her commitment to her beloved club. She ends her history with an account of the weeks prior to the loss of the building, before moving onto a statement of future intent. In this she asserts the primacy of the membership over the material resources and describes the future as a 'new adventure' (p.138). She could not then have realised that the years that followed would be so difficult. In an epilogue written for the second edition, published in the year of the Diamond Jubilee, she records the difficulties of inadequate temporary accommodation which occasioned five moves in ten years and the financial implications of reconstruction. By 1952, the Club had relocated to Hand Court, Holborn where Montagu House remains, a centre of Jewish youth and community activity. Lily Montagu never really retired, being involved in the work of the centre until her death in January 1963 (Spence, 1998).

My Club and I covers the development of the organisation launched in Soho in 1894 as the West Central Jewish Girls' Club. Montagu's vision of social work is related in other publications (1901; 1904; 1943), and there are moments here where she repeats herself. However, the history of the West Central Club is not told elsewhere. Although her philosophy, founded upon her religious faith and liberal politics had not essentially changed since the essay *The Girl in the Background* (1904) was published, by 1941 she had acquired a fund of practical wisdom; wisdom that addresses the principles under-pinning successful community and youth work. Any practitioner aware of the dynamics of constructive engagement with groups and individuals will surely relate to the story told by Montagu.

One of the interesting aspects of *My Club and I* is that it provides a template for assessing how far the changing social and political climate impacts upon what are discussed as the priorities of practice at any given time. Some principles which Montagu took for granted

in 1941 are no longer widely embraced. In particular, her emphasis upon the importance of personal friendship is now at the margins rather than the centre of community and youth work discourse, not only discarded but viewed as problematic in a less 'innocent' world. Other principles, for instance, that community and youth work are predicated upon voluntary participation and are educational in purpose, whilst retaining currency, are no longer to be taken for granted and are a source of continuing struggle in work distorted by the instrumentalism of politicians. Yet others, such as the notion that club practices and processes can contribute to the development of active and responsible citizenship amongst participants have ebbed and flowed according to fashion and accordingly proved vulnerable to divergent interpretation. All these principles, no matter what their contemporary currency, remain inscribed within practice and are worthy of consideration outside the imperatives of fashionable policy and funding-led realism.

No organisation can be free from the impact of changing social and economic conditions but some, such as the West Central Club, survive the vagaries of time and fashion better than others. Long term survival is not accidental. It suggests there is something enduring at the core of the organisation that enables adaptation without self-destruction. One can discern this within *My Club and I* – deep convictions, unwavering commitment of workers to the wellbeing of members, belief in the value of all regardless of status, and an understanding that all are important as both individuals and members of a community.

Montagu describes how gradually the Jewish Community which the Club was designed to serve moved outwards from the districts around Soho. Changes such as improved housing conditions and access to commercial leisure activities meant members were increasingly drawn from a wider area and 'not so dependent upon Club entertainment'. Accordingly, even in the face of her own disappointment, club activities had to change. For example, Montagu admitted that excursions and annual holidays to the Green Lady Hostel in Hampshire, once such a feature of the club programme, could 'not in future play an important part in Club life' (p94) even though the occasional vignette which she provides indicates just how significant she had considered them to be:

> *Our people were deeply refreshed by the sea and loved to bathe. They appreciated the point of view of a small girl belonging to another club who said that the sea was the only thing in God's world of which there was enough for everybody, and she laughed and laughed as she said it.* (p90)

Regretfully, change implied loss:

> *I am not sure that [the modern girl] knows the depth of happiness which we had on the old-fashioned Club holiday, but she thinks that she knows something better. Who can tell?* (p95)

Montagu understood that adaptability was essential to maintaining membership loyalty. Whatever her regrets, she knew that this was ultimately superficial because the meaning of the work was deeper:

> *However attractive the club programmes, the girl's membership did not depend for its value to herself on the activity of the Club. She came to us because she knew we were interested in her. She could talk to us. We cared.* (p31)

Willingness to keep abreast of changes in young people's lives and responsiveness to their interests was part of an unchanging process of caring. This, built upon the principle of friendship, would sustain it in the face of increased competition from commercial facilities:

> *Our Club is upheld always on the social side by the spirit of friendliness among its members, and the pleasure of being together.* (p79)

Over time, the organisation grew and matured. West Central opened as a girls' club; by 1940 it was a mixed club and settlement, catering for all ages. Some members grew with it. For instance, Nellie Levy, an original girls' club member, followed Montagu into the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs, becoming the paid secretary. Subsequently Levy replaced Montagu when she withdrew from daily involvement in the running of West Central in 1928. Members who emigrated founded the Montagu Club in New York, and financially supported West Central (p114). *My Club and I* tells of an organisation continuously broadening its activities to meet emerging needs and in the process becoming a community, with its own internal dynamic and self-governing democracy.

In the early years, Montagu was particularly concerned about the impact of work upon club members. Consequently she involved herself with organisations campaigning to improve employment conditions for women and girls, including the Clubs Industrial Association (CIA) (forerunner of the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs, which became UK Youth), the Industrial Law Association (under the presidency of Beatrice Webb) and the Industrial Law Committee. All these were linked to the Women's Industrial Council (WIC). By1940, although still concerned about the competitive individualism fostered by the working environment, her focus had shifted as she believed that:

> *Workshop life has immeasurably improved with the increased wage-earning capacity of women and with their political enfranchisement.* (p61)

From the late 1920s Montagu mainly gave her attention to 'religious work'. Whilst she was developing her Club, she was engaged in a struggle relating to her religious faith that culminated in a break with both Orthodoxy and her family in favour of Liberal Judaism. This break caused her deep pain, especially as it alienated her father (Montagu, 1913). However, the process of personal development and change fostered within her a tolerance and compassion for the personal struggles and differences of others. Perhaps inevitably, as she aged, her focus also shifted from daily involvement in the young people's club towards working in the Settlement where she found: 'people like to discuss personal and family problems with us, and to ask advice on questions of social, industrial, educational and religious interest' (p107).

Whatever her focus and whoever she was working with, conversation and informal discussion were integral to her practice. She used informal and confidential discussions with members to help enforce Factory Act legislation upon non-complying employers much as she used quiet 'talks under the tree' at the Green Lady Hostel to encourage self-awareness and religious knowledge. Throughout, she never wavered in her understanding of how friendly and confidential conversation could influence development, and underpin loyalty to the ideals of the Club.

At the individual level West Central was sustained through its friendly relationships,

informality and participative style. This approach was reinforced at a structural level by more formally organised social and educational activities, for example, art, drama, operatics, sculpture, physical exercise, and technical and 'serious' classes such as literature. 'Sex instruction' and classes in citizenship were also offered. Subjects changed along with circumstances, those relating to 'industrial life' and industrial law, a dominating feature of the earlier work, faded over time (Spence, 2004). Montagu noted how the experience of undertaking men's work during the 1914–18 War and securing the vote helped improve the female position within the labour market. Though she does not say this, her members were also constantly improving their social position as they shed their 'immigrant' status.

Rather than industrial law, citizenship was the main theme after 1940. This reflected the concerns of the time. Those involved in the West Central were well informed about events in Germany via their contacts with German Jews, and the Club had received and provided support for numerous refugees from Europe. Nearer home, in the years leading up to the war, the activities of the British Union of Fascists were a constant threat to the safety of members. Meanwhile the growing influence of communism offended Montagu's liberal sensibilities. Citizenship had always been an issue for the Club but by 1940 it had acquired new resonance. Although she thought the Club had succeeded in a number of respects regarding citizenship Montagu therefore bewailed the general lack of interest in citizenship classes:

> *... we have not been able to raise a very general or well sustained interest in citizenship, and we deplore this fact ... We are responsible in a great measure for the use made by the girls of their scanty hours of leisure. Some of this time must undoubtedly be devoted to training in citizenship, or we are unfaithful to the democratic ideal of our time. We must have thinking citizens. We see in our clubs, moreover, the bad effects of undigested slogans. Religious belief affects our political creeds. The two are related in the world, and our club should be in miniature a world at its best. All our dreams for a new and enlightened community must find realisation on however small a scale in our club.* (p58)

Considering the club as a world in miniature meant that all her aspirations and ideals for a just society were to be found in its organisation and methods. Montagu understood that if club workers believed in democracy in principle, then they must find ways of introducing democratic practices into the club environment. She learned at an early stage there was no point in disclaiming 'against patronage' if club workers then patronised members. In a sense, club membership spoke of citizenship on a small scale. The freedoms and benefits it afforded were won through collective activity, friendship, mutual trust and respect and were expressed in democratic management.

Levy (1968) wrote that Montagu's work had been inspired by a vision which she describes as one of personal service seeking to create a 'new and enlightened community' of learning, sharing and an absence of want. Whilst learning and sharing could be achieved within the club, more than this was needed, especially in the early years, to address want. Living and working conditions in those years affected not only the physical health of young people, but were responsible for attitudes and behaviour destructive of moral and physical wellbeing. In a brief anecdote, Montagu encapsulates her understanding of the desperation of the prevailing situation:

> *Soon after Miss Lewis started her flower guild, through which seeds and plants were distributed for home use, a little girl was seen standing in the street clutching her plant. 'I thought I had better take it outside,' she said, 'because it wanted air and light.' It has taken some generations of thinking men and women to realise fully that human beings also want air and light.* (p71)

Always both practical and idealistic, Montagu was not overwhelmed by the extent of the need. In *My Club and I* she explains that her father told her that she would never have sufficient resources to do everything, so she might as well get on and do what she could. She took this advice to heart. Her aims were always high but her interventions were always achievable. She could not solve the housing problem, but the Club could provide 'air and light'. Holidays and excursions directly addressed this need, and her description of the building bombed in Alfred Place makes plain that space and light had been a primary consideration in its design. Similarly, she was fully aware she could do little to directly affect working conditions and wages. However, she could use her status to influence decision makers and her Club to develop schemes and programmes to aid the young women whose lives were so constricted by their work. Thus she sought to intervene in industrial matters through her campaigning work within the WIC, to secure stricter enforcement of the Factory Acts, and via club activity, such as the creation in 1905 of an Employment Bureau. Later West Central sponsored an artificial flower-making enterprise as a 'co-operative business'. This concern, where 'the happy conditions are much appreciated' became a Limited Liability Company employing young women, irrespective of whether they were club members or Jewish, on the basis of a five-day working week. Montagu attempted to encourage girls to participate in Trade Union activity, but admits that this met with little success.

By the time *My Club and I* was written living and working conditions had improved and the state had begun to take some responsibility for services, but not sufficiently to make the Club redundant. For instance, before the NHS, health care was addressed as a Club concern. Initially the Club offered the services of a doctor. This expanded to include clinics for medical and dental treatment. Then a chiropodist was recruited and occasionally a masseuse to ease aching bodies. By 1940 the Settlement was providing a comprehensive health and medical insurance scheme. Such social, industrial and medical work addressed substantive welfare needs within the community. Much of this need was subsequently met by the post war Welfare State. Nevertheless, Montagu believed there was still much that settlements and clubs such as hers could do to complement state welfare. For instance, the work of the Employment Bureau in the Club was significantly reduced by improved Labour Exchanges, but the Bureau continued to offer advice to school-leavers and put them in touch with employers known to the club. In particular it supported those who encountered anti-Semitism in or when seeking work. So, at the very least, the Club offered a personal service not always feasible in the context of mass provision.

The title *My Club and I* is indicative of the degree to which there was no clear distinction between Montagu's life and her work. She considered her work to be an expression of the values and principles by which she lived. Her commitment to personal service was integral to her faith and her idea of a 'Living Judaism' wherein religion was one with life, rather than being reduced to ceremony and form. She did not consider such service a sacrifice. On the contrary she believed that because club workers 'receive more from our work, far

more happiness than we can hope to give, we have no right to talk after the manner of benefactors' (p73).

The worker's role was to engage in a personal act of sharing those things they most valued in life. For Montagu these were 'education, friendship, faith'. She never wavered from this principle, holding that the value of a club to its members emerged from the relationships it engendered between people:

> *I learned that a Club to be of value must influence every phase of its members' lives and that its keynote must be sympathetic sharing. Before many years had passed, we had to deal with large numbers. It was all important that each member should count.* (p31)

> *There is something ... which the Club gives which cannot be supplied elsewhere, and which counts for a good deal in the girls' lives. This something is made up of personal sympathy and understanding, and an opportunity for corporate service which stimulates the individual girl's self-respect.* (p72)

The idea that relationships are at the core of successful community and youth work is not one currently in vogue. Montagu was neither given to theoretical and philosophical niceties nor to airy notions that all relationships were equally productive or 'good' but in *My Club and I* she returns constantly to the significance of relationships characterised by mutuality, respect and understanding. She was aware that relationships created within the club never existed in a sealed space. To be a real friend, meant for her being prepared to know all aspects of an individual's life, including knowledge of family and home circumstances, working life and industrial conditions. Acknowledging the life of girls outside the Club involved home visiting. In the book, she explains this visiting was not investigative. It differed in every respect from the 'visiting' of Charity Organisation Society officers and later of the despised means testing officials of the National Assistance Board. Rather it was part of a process of personalising her work, of knowing the member as a whole person and of informing the family of the role and intentions of the club workers. As she explains

> *I have found visiting to be an essential part of Club work, and we visit in order to establish friendly relations with the families of our members. Our visiting is different from ordinary district work. It is altogether removed from any kind of means enquiry. The club has been established to enable girls and women of different education and circumstances to come together and to work for a high standard of home and civic life. We have had delightful experiences in our home visiting. Hardly ever has the purpose of our visits been misunderstood.* (p106)

Her visiting was reciprocated by the invitations to members to visit the Montagu home when she lived with her parents and later to Red Lodge which she inhabited with her sister and Miss Lewis (the 'Red Lodge Trio'). It is possible to discern in this the significance of the personal in youth and community work, of the importance of melding the private and the public that was a feature of early social work, overwhelmingly delivered by women. In some senses, it was the ambiguity of the single sex club as a public/private venue and the private associations of 'visiting' which facilitated the possibility of middle class young women embarking upon such voluntary work without threatening their femininity (Spence, 2003). Montagu was not particularly unusual in this regard and initially there was no question but that her club work would be undertaken in a single sex environment. In the years between

the wars, the pressure to 'mix' became more insistent and she adapted. However, her preference for single sex work is apparent from *My Club and I*:

> *Since by nature boys and girls are not the same, they need separate training ... the tendency among clubs which are entirely mixed is, I think, to deal less thoroughly with character training. We have to decide whether our primary object is to give our young people the best possible time, or to train them for the highest citizenship.* (p80)

The personalised methods Montagu adopted, the development of friendship and the understanding that the single sex setting can yield gains not available in the mixed setting, prefigured much subsequently rediscovered and struggled over by feminist youth workers after 1970. However, there was something qualitatively different in Montagu's belief system from that of later feminists, expressed in her statement that 'by nature girls and boys are not the same'. She believed in an essential, God-given difference between the sexes which fitted them for different roles in society – equal but different and complementary – and the roles she assigned them were, despite her own singularity, those traditionally linked to motherhood and family. She was typical of her time and class possessing a Victorian rigidity regarding her ideas about sex and marriage. Although not averse to discussing personal matters, running sex-education classes and disabusing club members of some of their more archaic and dangerous views about sex, she expressed total distaste for light-hearted approaches to sexual relations.

From comments in *My Club and I*, it might be deduced that her efforts relating to working conditions were in the first instance prompted by a belief that these led some girls to marry at the first opportunity. She abhorred the fact that poverty and dead-end jobs resulted in some girls making unsatisfactory marriages, encouraged flirting and undignified behaviour and reinforced the views of employers that girls were not to be taken seriously in the workplace. For Montagu marriage and family were a sacred duty for women. Despite her otherwise generous ecumenicism, her seriousness about marriage embraced a total opposition to Jews marrying Gentiles.

The club Montagu nurtured was born in a climate of Jewish immigration and was part of a broader response on the part of the settled community to helping the new immigrants to integrate without losing their Jewish identity. The maintenance of Jewish identity, especially from the perspective of her deeply held religious faith, was central to her mission. She admitted a lack of success in encouraging religious observance amongst members, but she had considerable success in promoting and sustaining a more general Jewish cultural identity that was ultimately linked to a religious faith.

In a book she wrote about her father after his death (Montagu, 1913) she speaks of his experience of Anti-Semitism when studying at a Mechanics Institute in Liverpool and his determination to work on behalf of fellow Jews and to fight it. She was determined to carry this forward not only on her own behalf, but on behalf of her members. In a moment of rare passion she argues against the injustice of Anti-Semitism:

> *The prejudice against employing Jewish girls is one of the unnecessary troubles which we have to endure, and it causes us naturally a great deal of pain ... The firms have some Jews at least among their customers, and do not scruple to trade with them.*

The God whom the Jews seek to serve is the God of the Christians. The founder of the Christian religion was himself a Jew ... The employer says to the bewildered and indignant Jewish applicant that he must consider English girls first for work. But our girls are English, or if not born here have for the most part been educated in England. They wish to identify their interests with the interests of our country. They do not regard themselves as anything but English. There may be some justification for the feeling that English girls must be taken before foreign girls, but surely there should be no religious discrimination. Moreover, if the position of the foreign girls is investigated, and it is realised that they are bringing some gifts of mind and heart with which they ask leave to enrich our English life, are we not doing wrong if we refuse employment to such workers, whatever their origin? ... One girl may be less fitted than another for a particular job. Then, in justice to the public, we must refuse her, but if she is the more suitable, then, whatever her faith or nationality, let us not refuse her, for in so doing we are turning away from the All Father and creating misery for which he will make us render an account ... (p69)

Montagu's arguments point to recurring issues – nationality, citizenship, identity, equality of opportunity. Yet her appeal for equality based primarily upon the 'Englishness' of the Jewish girls, demonstrates something of the weakness of her position. Like her fellow club worker, Basil Henriques (Jeffs, 2003), she had not moved away from earlier ideas about assimilation. 'Keeping a low profile' had been the preferred method of countering Anti-Semitism, becoming 'English' whilst maintaining Jewish identity. In 1940 the limits of such an approach which implied that racism was simply a prejudice born of fear of difference, must have been all too obvious but Montagu never moved beyond the old way of thinking; was never able to critique the structural and ideological racism of the establishment of which she was so much a part. Perhaps to have done so would have destabilised the carefully won respectability of the Club and Settlement.

Montagu's description of herself as a 'pioneer' is an accurate one. A wealth of experience sharpened by her commitment to and identification with a minority, often threatened, community is condensed into this book. Partly because of this, and partly because of her religious faith, Montagu's work was focused, consistent and self-confident not only in terms of 'what works' but also regarding the values and methods that make 'what works' worthwhile. Yet the book is simply written in a way that belies the sophistication of her thinking.

In the end, the values Montagu promoted are enduring. They are based upon respect for the other and a desire to add something positive and constructive to the lives of those living in difficult circumstances. Such values are pursued in the community and youth work setting primarily through the worker's willingness to be of service to others and to learn from others. The engagement is educational and developmental. Montagu believed that 'friendship' was at its heart. For some that concept is outmoded. However the implication that there must be some investment of the self in the work is not. Without such an investment, the trust that generates dialogue and conversation through which all participants learn and grow cannot take root. Lily Montagu knew this and it is integral to the story told in *My Club and I*.

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Reviews

Aylssa Cowell

Richard Hammersley, Furzana Khan and Jason Ditton
Ecstasy and the Rise of the Chemical Generation
Routledge, 2002
ISBN 0-415-27041-3
pp172

Who uses Ecstasy, what are the long term health risks, and what part do drugs really play in the lives of those who take them? These are just some of the questions the authors attempted to establish when undertaking this welcome study of Ecstasy users.

In the UK we now have the most drug experienced young people in Europe, with only Ireland coming anywhere close. It is the consumption of dance drugs which has propelled us to the top of the league tables, these drugs include Cannabis, Speed, Poppers, Cocaine, and of course Ecstasy and it is thought that one in four adolescents by their late teens will become regular recreational users of one drug or another (Measham et al. 2001). With this in mind it is astonishing that full length studies of users of these drugs are not widely available. However, at the same time, it is not overly surprising when funding all too often is spent on controlling what could be argued is already out of control with an estimated 2.4 million regular users of Ecstasy in this country alone (Observer 2002).

The emphasis of this study appears to be to show that Ecstasy users are 'normal everyday' people. Using snowball sampling the authors were able to undertake quantitative research with 229 'Glaswegians' from varying social groupings. From these 22 were picked to undertake qualitative interviews where their drug use and lifestyles were studied in more depth and the results from those interviews form the main body of the book. The interviews it should be noted took place between December 1993 and June 1995.

Many studies of drug use define users by their drug of choice and where this study stands out is that it purposely paints a wider picture of each of its subjects. We are told about employment status, educational achievements, beliefs, other criminal activity and medical problems. This allows the reader to understand that their drug use fits into their lifestyle, not that their lifestyle is defined by their drug use.

Chapter one concerns itself with the responses of the quantitative data from the large sample as well as the reasons the small sample first got into using Ecstasy, their experiences and whether they have persuaded other people to use the drug. The similarities between experiences are striking, and more than usual space is given to exploring the responses given. This makes for interesting reading. This book is not primarily aimed at an academic audience and this means that trying to extract figures and percentages may be a difficult task, but in terms of quality quantitative data it has it in abundance.

The small sample was also asked about types of people who use Ecstasy, and identified that there was no such thing as a typical user. Use cuts across all generations, all social types and people use in different ways. The small sample itself was a cross section of employed and unemployed, those with post graduate degrees and those who left school with no qualifications, those from middle class homes and those from working class areas, stable users and erratic users and light, medium and heavy users. The authors could not find any correlation between use and any other variable. The reason could be that the 1990s was the decade when drug use became normalised. The ways in which people use the drug are also wide and varied. Ecstasy and other dance drugs will always be synonymous with the rave, and later club scene in Britain, but it is interesting to note that people also use it in different ways, for example at home. This should not come as much of a surprise when originally Ecstasy (MDMA) was used as an aid to psychotherapy (Thomas 2002).

What is apparent within this research however is that, for the majority of the sample, taking Ecstasy and for most, raving, is a small part of their lives and not something they plan to do forever. When asked if they would ever quit, all replied yes, for varying reasons. Some believed that the scene would die out or they would grow out of it, the latter being the reason many people stop using. It seems for many young people recreational drug use is now part and parcel of growing up. It is a calculated risk they take for a short period in their life, and despite the beliefs of some of those interviewed, the club scene and the recreational drug use which goes with it has not gone away but has grown even bigger.

The main body of research was undertaken between 1993 and 1996. It is now 2004. The average price of an Ecstasy pill then was £25, it is now £5, with Mixmag claiming that the £1 pill is here and stronger than ever. MDMA content has risen and the price has fallen due to simple supply and demand. More young people are using and we cannot answer the one question that every drug user wants to know 'what are the long term health risks associated with my drug of choice?' Moreover Ecstasy is very rarely used in isolation, a follow up to this research has to be a full length study of the effects of not only Ecstasy, but of recreational poly drug use.

This book will no doubt become a classic study of the most talked about drug of the 1990s. However, without fully understanding the health risks involved it does not take us any further forward.

Aylssa Cowell, Project Worker, Streetwise Young People's Project, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

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Ron Kirby

Yvonne Hillier
Reflective Teaching in Further and Adult Education
Continuum, 2002
ISBN 0-8264-5160-8
£16.99 (pbk)
pp. 276

This is a useful book. It has been designed to help people who teach adults and systematically covers the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) Standards for teaching and supporting learning in further education in England and Wales, but the book's approach to reflective teaching will have wider appeal. Reading it certainly made me reflect on my professional practice in teaching youth and community work students in higher education and I believe it will appeal to those involved in all levels of training for youth and community work.

The book is grounded on the author's experience and is built round her adherence to a critically reflective approach. This informs the text throughout and I found the use of case studies in the process of analysing assumptions about the teaching and learning process very helpful. The book is organised in three parts. Part One explains what reflective practice is and the context of teaching. Part Two deals with the practicalities of teaching, whilst the final part focuses on evaluation and the development of professional practice.

I particularly enjoyed the first chapter on Reflective Practice. There is a clear exposition of the process with a strong emphasis on critical reflection. Hillier uses the work of Brookfield to good effect, in particular his notion of critical lenses (p7), the suggestion that we can look at a situation from our own viewpoint, from our colleagues' viewpoint, from our learners' viewpoint and from theoretical literature. The importance and place of theory are fully explored, as is the value of being critical. Reflection is not meaningful without the critical element. The application of critical theory to practice is what makes for professionalism in teaching. This first chapter makes a good platform for the remainder of the book and if I have a criticism it is that not enough is made of it in the later stages. Reflective practice is the theme for the book throughout by example or implication but I would have expected some return to the philosophical principles established early on at least in conclusion.

Part Two: The Practice of Reflective Teaching forms the main body of the book and provides a manual for reflective practice. Anyone involved in an educational process with adults in a variety of settings will find the chapters in this section very informative. Those in the early stages of their career will find the detailed approach to establishing learning needs and styles, planning a relevant programme and developing appropriate learning resources an invaluable aid. It is good to see in one place both a discussion of the literature on learning styles, for example, alongside case studies and advice on further information and reading. This is an exceptionally practical handbook. In the chapter on developing learning resources, for example, the author works from a case study to a discussion of what resources are and into top tips and top mistakes. The full range of possible resources is covered including a balanced approach to ICT. As Hillier concludes: 'the key principles in using resources are

appropriate for the learning required ... resources do not have to be produced by 'state of the art' technology to be effective. They do, however, need to be of high quality so that learners feel respected and motivated to learn' (p140).

Experienced teachers will also gain from a close perusal of this text. I found the chapter on teaching and learning methods had the desired effect of getting me to reflect on the range of techniques I have built up over the years. Youth workers might find it helpful to read the chapter on working in groups. Both in youth work, and teaching youth workers in higher education, group work is claimed to be central to what we do, yet I would argue, complacency abounds in our understanding of working with groups. Hillier does not underestimate the complexity of working in groups. Again working from a case study there is pertinent and succinct advice on the conditions for successful group work. The chapter draws upon the study of group dynamics and takes due account of the emotional reaction to group situations. It explores reflective practice in group work and dealing with the surprises that group work throws up, not least dealing with conflict.

This section is rounded off with a chapter on assessment, which invites the reader to consider what and when to assess and what are appropriate assessment methods. Comments on feedback on assessment are particularly helpful.

The final section of the book is brief with a chapter on evaluation and a final chapter on improving professional practice. Both of these are tied into the context of Further and Adult Education. There can be no complaints there since that is what the book is about. In so far as good general points are made about evaluation and that the point of reflection is indeed to improve professional practice these chapters do have a wider audience. The book is brought to a logical conclusion with a final paragraph on professional values, which is equally relevant to other professional groups. In the narrowness of the final two chapters I did wonder, however, whether an opportunity to link up with the earlier philosophical discussion had been lost.

The insistence on critical reflection throughout and the detailed analysis on how that might be achieved make this book a very welcome addition to the literature in this area. The thoughts and theories underpinning reflective teaching may not be new but they are well marshalled here and will be appreciated by all those involved in the broad field of adult education.

Ron Kirby, College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth.

J. Shoshanna Ehrlich

Cynthia B. Costello, Vanessa R. Wight, and Anne J. Stone (Eds)
The American Woman 2003-2004: Daughters of a Revolution – Young Women Today
The Women's Research Institute Palgrave Macmillan, 2003
ISBN 0 312-29549 9
pp. 381

The American Woman 2003-2004: Daughters of a Revolution-Young Women Today examines the lives of young women born at the height of the second Women's Rights Movement in the United States. Of central importance, the book seeks to compare the lives of these 'daughters of the revolution' (aged 25–35 at the start of the 21st century) with the lives of women in their mothers' generation in order to assess the extent to which visions of transformation have been realised.

The book is divided into three major sections. The first, entitled 'Daughters of a Revolution-Young Women Today', forms the heart of the book. Framing the presentation, this content-rich section begins with two interviews in which a mother and daughter talk openly about their lives. Centre stage here are their shifting understandings of the proper role of women and the seemingly ever-present work-family tension – themes that run throughout the book. It consists of six chapters that provide the reader with a wealth of information about the educational, economic, employment and health status of the young women who are the focus of this book. Drawing on this data, the authors discuss gains that women have made, such as the transformative effect of reproductive choice. Discussed also are the ways in which the revolution has been 'stalled,' such as through the continued institutionalisation of traditional gender expectations which still operate to place the demands of home on the shoulders of women.

The next section is not limited to women between the ages of 25 and 35, but rather provides a comprehensive statistical portrait of women in the United States. (This is in keeping with previous editions in the American Woman series.) Organised thematically, more than 100 charts and tables are included which provide the reader with a wealth of information regarding the 'measurable' aspects of women's lives, including, for example: educational attainment, weekly earnings, employment status and benefits, and status in the military.

Also in keeping with earlier editions in this series, this book contains a section about women in the United States Congress. This third and final section begins with an essay focussing on the accomplishments and goals of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues at its 25th year, and then provides a brief biographical sketch of the women in Congress.

As the title makes clear, the first section on 'Daughters of a Revolution' gives the work its singular identity and place within the American Woman series. Accordingly, the following comments focus on this section of the book.

In terms of strengths, I begin with the fact that the book provides the reader with comprehensive and well-presented information about the lives of this cohort of young women, and anyone interested in learning about defined aspects of these lives would be well advised to consult this work. For example, if one were seeking information about their economic wellbeing, one need only turn to Chapter Five. This goes well beyond discussions of earnings (and the all too familiar gender-gap) to document how the accumulation of assets, indebtedness, the availability of public benefits, as well as spending patterns and behavioural considerations, combine to determine overall economic status.

Similarly, Chapter Two provides a comprehensive picture of the employment status of this

cohort. Not only does it discuss rates of labour force participation and the distribution of women across occupations, it looks at alternative work arrangements, the concerns of displaced workers and the working poor within this age group, and access to work-place benefits.

Further enriching the informational depth of this book, the authors are careful not to present the age cohort under consideration as a monolithic unit. They do an admirable job of taking race, class, and ethnicity into account when discussing the status and wellbeing of these young women. Thus, for example, in discussing the gains that have been made in overall health status, the uneven distribution of these across racial lines is carefully accounted for. With similar attention to the diversity within this age group, Chapter Four entitled 'Integrating Work and Life: Young Women Forge New Solutions,' provides a welcome break from the usual focus on the high power career woman who is struggling to meet the demands of work and home. Although not excluded from consideration, the book also looks at how this tension plays out in the lives of women who occupy other rungs of the occupational ladder, making clear that the difficulty of juggling multiple demands is greatest for women who command the fewest resources and have the least amount of flexibility.

Turning now to some concerns I had about the book. First, although the introduction states that the book's comparative focus is between young women between the ages of 25 and 35 and women of their mother's generation, this was not always the case. Although these comparisons were included, the book also contains comparisons between young women and their male counterparts, and in at least one place, detailed comparisons between men were provided. Not that this information lacks importance, but its inclusion results in information overload. It detracts from the book's central focus, thus making it difficult to form and maintain a consistent picture of the similarities and differences between the two generations of women. Also of concern is the lack of explanation accompanying much of the data. For example, we learn that learning disorders are becoming more prevalent, but there is no attempt to explain why this is more of an issue for women today than it was 25 years ago.

At points, these two flaws merge. Thus, for example, we learn that the rate of major depression in women is significantly higher than it is in men, but we do not learn about comparative rates of depression between the two generations of women under consideration in the text. Thus, this comparison does not contribute to the reader's understanding of changing life patterns. Perhaps, there is something of intrinsic value to this comparative information – that in understanding gender-based differentials, one might learn something important about young women themselves. However, the reasons for this gender difference are not explained, and, thus, again, the information does not advance the purpose of the book. As a result, at times, I felt as if I was wading through vast amounts of information, which I could not integrate into a coherent whole. I felt as if I was simply accumulating facts which lacked contextual meaning.

Finally, although the book is sensitive to issues of race, ethnicity and class, a heterosexual norm seems to pervade the text. The book seems to assume that women will partner with men and will have babies within the context of a heterosexual relationship. Thus, for

example, although there are multiple references to spousal benefits, the fact that such benefits are generally not available to same-sex partners is not examined. Similarly, in discussing work-home conflicts, the other parent, if discussed, is always male. It is as if same-sex families do not exist within this cohort – an omission, which although certainly not purposeful, cannot help but to reinforce heterosexual normativity, particularly given how sensitive the book otherwise is to considerations of diversity within this age group.

J. Shoshanna Ehrlich teaches Law and Women's Studies at the College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Tony Jeffs

Marilyn D. McShane and Frank P. Williams III
Encyclopaedia of Juvenile Justice
Sage, 2003
ISBN 0-7619-2358-6
pp416

James C. Howell
Preventing and Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A comprehensive framework
Sage, 2003
ISBN 0-7619-2509
£29.00
pp393

Odd but true I found the *Encyclopaedia of Juvenile Justice* a gripping read. The original intention was to flick through it on the outward train journey then settle down to read something with a coherent narrative on the way back. It did not work out that way. Read it going down, coming back and through the evening before polishing it off the following day. Cover-to-cover, every item – honest. Why? Well, in a nut-shell, because I found it informative, well-written and absolutely fascinating.

The editors commissioned over two hundred short articles from a hundred plus writers. As the title implies these are linked to 'juvenile justice'. However, the choice was not predictable. Consequently as you were led through the alphabet from the onset of 'A' (Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act) to the conclusion of 'W' (Wolfgang, Marvin Eugene 1924–1998) you were constantly surprised by what you encountered along the way. Taken aback they failed to conjur up a Z, although I did predict at one point it would close with Zap Gun. The editors interpreted their remit to embrace the life experiences of 'offenders', the systems managing them, the agencies seeking to 'apprehend' them, the organisations trying to divert them and the academics and practitioners assiduously trying to understand them. Reading the Encyclopaedia is akin to following genealogy – the mind constantly moving in each and every direction. One moment it is 'Girls and Boys Town' – 2,500 words recounting the historical development of an innovative project launched in 1917 by Father Edward Flanagan in Nebraska. An open-house for boys of all races and

religions who came because they had offended, were homeless or needed somewhere to 'escape to'. It grew into a virtually self-sustaining community before branching out into providing a range of services and outreach programmes in addition to villages for young men and women. Then it is Eleanor and Sheldon Glueck. A 1,800 word overview of their research, in particular, the longitudinal and comparative studies of offenders and the prediction tables they subsequently developed on the basis of the enormous volume of data they accumulated. Next Graffiti and Tagging ...

Entries vary in length from the tiny 300 word unit to those that amount to chapter length. For example 'Gangs' is allocated 14 pages and 7,000 or more words. Large or small each entry includes a bibliography of further reading and a helpful 'see also' list of related entries to follow-up. Thankfully the Encyclopaedia also has an index. This is enormously helpful when you wish to trace the coverage of a particular idea or policy.

All the contributors work in US universities or for American organisations. Interestingly they seem to overwhelmingly have been recruited from certain states. Strangely apart from Mr Jenkins from Rhode Island I could find no contributors from New England for example. References to policy, writers and research generated outside of the US are rare. But this matters not. For what one has is a reference book that provides in totality a wide-ranging insight into American youth policy. Not a book the general reader will be tempted to purchase, but one they would, I am certain, enjoy dipping into. Definitely one anyone teaching in the area of juvenile justice will refer to and use for handouts. Essential for the library of any university or college where juvenile justice or youth policy features on the timetable.

Howell is a different sort of manuscript although the author is writing, like the contributors to the Encyclopaedia, exclusively for an American audience. This is a student textbook for those reading for under-and post-graduate social work and juvenile justice degrees. It is detailed, comprehensive and abundantly referenced. It is not the intention of the author to do so but what he provides, by accident rather than design, is a near perfect introduction to US juvenile justice policy for those living elsewhere. Given the federal structure of the United States what emerges is a comparative study that looks at the multiplicity of juvenile justice programmes that have, and do, operate there. Tragically we have virtually destroyed local government as an autonomous creative entity in Britain. Opting instead for a degree of centralisation in matters relating to welfare and justice rarely encountered elsewhere in Europe. I recently heard a Swede, who after spending a term working in English schools, describe our structure to a group of her compatriots as Soviet Russian with more money invested in it. That just about sums it up I thought. It certainly increasingly captures the administrative structures of our juvenile justice system. In comparison local autonomy in America provides an array of approaches that range from the brutally neo-Gothic to the liberal and progressive. The result is that creativity is encouraged and practitioners have much more to share when they gather than the usually justified moans about management. Centralisation, targets and the cult of leadership has, as intended, virtually eradicated creative thinking amongst British juvenile justice practitioners. Consequently our politicians and policy makers don't look around them for new ideas but catch a jet to America. Where like Twain's Innocents Abroad they seem to frequently fall prey to the beguiling speel of authoritarian politicians, such as themselves, who promise 'sure-fire solutions' to the

problem of juvenile crime. What Howell does show is how discredited 'back home' are the policies our politicians, and their advisers, find so attractive – zero-tolerance, curfews, boot camps and incarceration. He also shows how community involvement can be a vital ingredient to reducing the scale or seriousness of offending. The problem with that is that community involvement correlates with community control and the vitality of local democracy. Back where we started you might say.

Preventing and Reducing Juvenile Delinquency is not a book that will attract a wide readership here. It is detailed and assumes an understanding on the part of the reader of how the American political and legal systems work that some will find irritating. However, it is a useful text certainly for those who want to stay ahead of our policy-makers. Who want to be able to evaluate the next half-baked policy import from America and explain to themselves, and anyone willing to listen, why it will stumble towards failure.

Tony Jeffs, University of Durham.

Anna Whalen

Rachel Simmons
Odd Girl Out – The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls
Harcourt, 2002
ISBN 0 15 602734 8
$14.99 (no UK price available)
pp 301

Bullying is increasingly acknowledged as a significant issue for young people, parents and schools. Causing misery and confusion, bullying wrecks self-esteem and can scar young people's lives for years. It can be an underlying factor in young people's refusal to go to school and in recognition of its impact, schools have anti-bullying strategies, some are even installing CCTV to spot bullying in the playground. The assumption within traditional thinking relating to bullying is that it can be seen and is solely about overt aggression, either physical or psychological, by a perpetrator towards a victim.

This book, researched and published in the USA, gives a new dimension to our understanding about bullying amongst girls, through analysing a set of behaviours that the author describes as alternative aggressions. These are such covert unidentifiable actions that teachers and parents are often oblivious, particularly when the individual at the receiving end is deemed to be a good or even best friend of the aggressor.

The author brings a feminist analysis to her research, which operates on the presumption that femininity, as a set of understandings about how women and girls behave, is most rigid amongst the white middle class. She describes a culture, which celebrates the niceness of girls, the perfect, idealised relationships between them and the pressure to seek popularity. It is within these relationships that alternative aggressions arise. Noting that we don't have a language to describe what goes on, Simmons lists behaviours such as excluding or ignoring, sabotaging relationships, starting rumours, non verbal gesturing, looks and note

passing. Girls are skilled at picking up on the tiniest signals and the hurt is not physical, but emotional. The aggression is not a single episode but endures over a prolonged period as an intentional campaign, begun by one girl and often drawing in others within a clique to exclude a girl. In the book girls and women recount their stories, many very similar, but all of which leave the same message: innocent childhood beliefs about what friends should be are shattered and the emotional impact is devastating and long term.

When any girl physically fights, they are pathologised, their behaviour is labelled as unfeminine and deviant by the dominant culture. Therefore girls have to find a way to express their natural anger and aggression in a way which is socially acceptable. It is apparent in the book that the behaviours that white middle class girls value amongst other girls reinforces traditional gender stereotypes of feminity and therefore force negative feelings to be dealt with through the covert behaviours Simmons unpicks. Being overtly angry is too risky and could lead to isolation, as can other behaviours: being self confident; assertive; confident in terms of sexuality; and independent in body or speech. All these are seen as negatives amongst girls and therefore as reasons to exclude others. Quieter girls are less likely to be seen as a threat. What struck a chord was the confusion of the cultural messages girls get about how they are meant to be and ultimately what their role as women in a Western society is. Whilst 'girl power', and some elements of youth culture, might promote their autonomy and right to be assertive these are countered by more traditional messages about restraint and modesty – the essence of femininity.

It is the fear of loss and loneliness that lead to girls clinging on to friendships that are emotionally damaging, unpredictable and based on power. The author poignantly recounts story after story where this is the case. Later on, Simmons makes the connection with domestic abuse and the difficulty girls and women have in leaving abusive relationships. Simmons does not shy away from talking candidly about her own experience and reflects on how many girls are victims at one time and then become aggressors later on, in order to maintain what they have got. Again, the fear of isolation is a feature in why girls sometimes behave in this way.

At points a thin line is walked and it is here where the book is at its most thought provoking. What is the experience of black girls, Hispanic girls, white working class girls? Cultural generalisations are made and acknowledged as problematic on a number of levels. For example, romanticising black girls for being more assertive and able to deal with negative feelings about friends more confidently is tempting, but Simmons points out it is also a set of behaviours learnt from their mothers. A set born out of the need to resist oppression and therefore a sign of their vulnerability. Behaving in this way when the dominant culture prescribes that girls should be nice, popular and perfect, has its own risks, in terms of social mobility and inclusion. However, walking another thin line, Simmons makes clear she is not promoting a view that girls are to be kind, perfect and nice all the time, but that they acquire the skills and confidence to voice their negative feelings more directly and assertively.

The book concludes with some advice for parents, girls and teachers, much of which is gleaned from girls themselves reflecting on what is and is not useful. The strategies that parents can employ are detailed, practical and helpful, as is the list of inappropriate

responses. Simmons notes that teachers in the USA are too focussed on the curriculum and results, reducing the time to devote to training in the more pastoral side of their work. Developing assertive communication between girls is viewed as only a partial solution. A starting point for schools is the incorporation of the specific alternative aggressive behaviours into anti-bullying strategies within schools, where they can be recognised and regulated for. The personal, private domain of these particular behaviours then becomes a public, shared issue.

How well the book's messages transfer to the UK is questionable. Much of it needs some translation due to the context – for example, class and ethnicity issues are different – but the underpinning framework and analysis seems to have credence. Listen to mothers and daughters describe their experiences and many of the points made are given validity. We need some cross cutting research to look at this in state and private schools, amongst working class and middle class girls and across the different white, black and Asian cultures within Britain. In the absence of such research, this book is a starting point for both parents and professionals.

Anna Whalen works for Hull City Council.

Janet Adams

Randall Easton Wickham and Janet West
Therapeutic Work with Sexually Abused Children
Sage, 2002
ISBN 0-7619-6969-1
pp. 177

The discovery of sexual abuse against children and adolescents shows no sign of abating and the phrase 'tip of the iceberg' is commonly used in relation to both the degree of harm and quantity of exposed cases. *Therapeutic Work with Sexually Abused Children* focuses wholly on the victim and the healing processes, without the added dimension of consideration for the perpetrators, or for the causes of sexual abuse. The first page asserts the need for society to accept responsibility for the causes and contributing factors which result in child sexual abuse and from this point on, blame and cause are not the issues, healing is.

The work is presented in 13 'bite size' chapters. Each includes case studies that both illuminate the theoretical underpinnings of therapeutic processes and usefully integrate theory and practice. As neither a therapist nor a counsellor I found this style particularly helpful. As new ideas were presented set in novel contexts, I found myself mentally posing queries for clarification and it seemed that as I turned the page those queries were addressed through the highlighted case studies.

The authors set out the parameters of the way in which they propose to deal with the issue early in the book, clarifying in starkly factual lists, the range of possible results of child sexual abuse for the victim. The horror is outlined clearly and simply, and as such has a powerful

impact. This is reinforced by the inclusion of poetry written by victims of abuse at the start of each chapter. 'He couldn't help himself – so he helped himself to me' (p1), is an example of this combination of simplicity and understatement.

The multiplicity of questions which need to be addressed as part of the therapeutic process are threaded through each of the chapters. These questions serve to reinforce the realisation of just how pervasive the impact of abuse is on a child and consequently just how broad the therapist's remit may become. The authors point to the need to focus on the victim of abuse as the significant and most important person, combined with the need to incorporate the child's carers, his or her immediate and past social and economic history, cultural environment, future care arrangements and so on. A similar 'list' of areas requiring exploration appears in each of the chapters and whilst this served to hammer the point home, it was at times repetitive and I found myself skipping some sections. In addition, there is a comprehensive summary at the end of each chapter.

This response may be because I'm not considering training in counselling or therapeutic processes, and I perceived the book to be clearly written for those engaged in, or considering such training. If you want to practice therapeutically in the field of child sexual abuse then this book will provide a detailed account of the processes you can expect to go through, together with a wide range of examples illuminating the type of sexual abuse issues with which you may be presented. This training manual approach extends to the inclusion of exercises at the end of chapters 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11, which are intended as questions for the reader to pose to themselves. I engaged with these and was plunged into a reflective process that put me, in turn, into the role of the abused child, the therapist and the carer. I found this powerful reading and an engaging and challenging experience.

Whilst the damage which can be caused by child sexual abuse, and the complexity of the treatment required, came as no surprise to me, the potential pitfalls of intervention, combined with the lack of any therapeutic blueprint for dealing with the consequences of that damage, make for a depressing read. And yet, what comes through from the text are simple and reassuring messages about the essential requirements of therapy, that is; – to ensure the child is safe; to truly hear what the child is saying through their non-verbal as well as their verbal communication; to make certain that the significant others in the child's life are considered/included as an essential part of the therapeutic process; and to ensure that therapists are continuously questioning themselves about their processes.

The focus of two of the chapters should perhaps be highlighted. Chapter 4 investigates the impact upon therapists of such work and the importance of the supervisory process in maintaining both psychological health and effective therapy, is emphasised. The dangers of over identifying, counter-transference and the need for therapists to deal with their own unresolved issues, are examples of the hazards which those involved in this work can expect to face. Whilst chapter 9 addresses the traumas of substance abuse and eating disorders in abused children and the display of inappropriate sexualised behaviour. The compound nature of the damage done through sexual abuse (if the reader had been in any doubt before), is further driven home. The fact that specific inappropriate behaviours such as use of drugs and/or the development of eating disorders are symptomatic of an extremely broad range of reasons clearly illustrates the complexity of the therapeutic processes.

Therapeutic Work with Sexually Abused Children locates the practice experience of the authors within a rigorous theoretical framework and is a readable and useable guide to the complexities of helping children and adolescents who have suffered the trauma of sexual abuse.

Janet Adams, Senior Lecturer University of Luton.

Mandy English

Angela M. Taylor
Responding to Adolescents: Helping relationship skills for youth workers, mentors and other advisors
Russell House Publishers, 2003
ISBN 1-903855-28-4

Taylor states in her introduction that this book is written for 'youth workers, mentors, sports coaches, personal advisors, scout or guide leaders, project organisers, social workers, education welfare officers, school personal tutors, YOT workers, youth work students and others who work with adolescents'.

This book is certainly jam-packed with information, theories, insights and possible scenarios and how to deal with them. The wide range of workers who the book is aimed at will find this a useful, practical guide, a book which should be dipped into at regular intervals, and in particular when feeling unsure on how to deal with a certain issue which may have developed.

The book is divided into four main parts. Part one focuses on building relationships and how to engage and communicate with young people. The next looks at important relationships for young people including those with parents, cultural difficulties for those belonging to minority groups and peer group relationships. It also considers how these may be positive or negative. The third section is based on issues that affect adolescents and their wellbeing. These include substance misuse, offending behaviour, sexuality and mental health issues. Finally, part four describes endings for young people and how they deal with referrals, unexpected endings and planned endings.

Taylor discusses confidentiality in chapter two. She offers examples within a workplace setting of when confidentiality is paramount but goes on to explain how it is equally important to know when and how confidences should be broken. Confidentiality is often used as a barrier for young people, either by people who do not want to engage with them or as a reason to prevent access to information and services therefore disempowering individuals. It is therefore important that boundaries are set and agreed by both the worker and the young person from the outset.

Taylor uses her background in psychology and counselling to offer detailed insights in Chapter 3, about how to recognise your own prejudices and how they might affect your

work. She offers clear basic counselling skills and ends with a helpful list of what should be avoided when working with young people.

Throughout the book Taylor offers practical examples to reinforce her case. Those provided emphasise what she is trying to explain and offer clear guidelines for appropriate responses. She does not assume the youth worker has all the answers, indeed she often directs the worker to refer to appropriate services or professionals. She highlights pitfalls particularly when working with families. When trying to involve parents it is crucial to include them as often and as early as possible, to be supportive and as cooperative as you can be. Taylor discusses problems with parents in detail in Chapter 5. I found this chapter interesting and worthwhile particularly as my own work is working with parents and carers who live with someone who has substance misuse issues. It is important to remember that the dynamics within a family setting are complex and that life does not often have the endings that we would hope for. Therefore a willingness to adopt the role of mediator between the two may offer the best way to move a situation forward.

As with all work with families, regardless of whether there is a substance misuse problem or an offending issue, it is very easy for parents to focus totally on the person directly involved and to forget other siblings. These often fade into the background and receive little attention as they are not causing any worry to the parent. Throughout my work with families, siblings acknowledge that they are pushed to one side. It is common that resentment and bitterness mixed with worry are being carried by siblings and if not acknowledged will often present itself later. Understanding these issues helps a worker to support others within the family and not merely focus on the user or offender.

In Chapter 11 Taylor discusses criminal offending, types of offending and risk factors. What I felt was missing was a discussion into how young people are frequently criminalised today. Society is placing more and more restrictions on the way young people go about their lives. With Anti Social Behaviour Orders, curfews, increases in young people being sent to prison, street wardens monitoring their every move, no benefit entitlements between 16 and 18 years, they are increasingly becoming marginalised.

The description of adolescents from ethnic minority groups having a crisis with their cultural identity and the different stages of 'Minority Identity Development Model' was very useful. This is particularly helpful if you work in an area that is predominately white and your involvement with minority groups is limited. Likewise her discussion of the identity crisis for a young person who may be confused about their sexuality (Chapter 12). Taylor helpfully discusses issues covering teenage pregnancy, death and bereavement and leaving home.

The book provides a detailed account of major issues that may impact upon the lives of adolescents; it offer insights and practical solutions in many areas. Reading it I concluded this would be a useful guide for inexperienced workers in the youth field. Youth workers need to develop their own working practices through experience, training and education. Taylor's book is one tool that many will find useful in that learning process.

Mandy English, County Durham Drug and Alcohol Action Team Project Coordinator and a National Campaigner against Miscarriages of Justice.

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The Editorial Group welcomes the submission of unsolicited articles which take an analytical approach to theoretical, policy or professional matters relating to young people in society.

Articles must be the original work of the author (s) and must not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.

Manuscripts should normally be between 3,500 and 8,000 words, including diagrams and references. In addition, authors should include an abstract of up to 150 words and three to five keywords.

If considered suitable, articles will be subject to anonymous peer review by two referees. This can sometimes take up to six months. The final decision regarding publication rests with the Editorial Group, who may occasionally recommend revisions and re-submission.

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Please limit the use of supplementary notes as far as possible. Notes, numbered in the main text and detailed at the end of the article, should be included in the word count.

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