



Annual Review 2013

WELCOME

Introduction

Welcome to a review of YMCA activities in 2012/13. The last 12 months have been both exciting and challenging. On one hand we have seen many examples of innovation in our youth work programmes as local YMCAs respond to the needs of young people while at the same time dealing with the reality of reduced resources. In response we have seen greatly improved levels of cooperation and examples of collaborative working between our associations and out of this is emerging a new vision for growth. During the last year YMCA worked with over 20,000 young people in 19 communities. While there is a great variety of programmes and services they are all aimed at promoting the personal development, healthy living and encouraging community engagement among young people. Enjoy the report and let us know by emailing us at stephen@ymca-ireland.net if you want further information.

YMCA Structures

The work of the YMCA in local communities is either managed by independent local YMCA charities with their own legal structures (Belfast City, Carrickfergus, Lisburn, Lurgan, North Down, L'derry, Portadown, Dublin, Cork) or are managed directly by National Council of YMCAs (YMCA Ireland) through local advisory groups (Greenhill, W Dublin, Donegal, Bandon, Bantry, Cobh, Ballincollig). YMCA Ireland is a charity registered in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It is also a Limited Company registered in the UK and affiliated to YMCA Europe and the World Alliance of YMCAs. The Board of YMCA Ireland consists of representatives of the local YMCAs.

Local Associations

YMCA work in Ireland began in Dublin in 1849 and quickly spread to Belfast, Londonderry and throughout the island. There is close cooperation between the associations at a regional level and there is a commitment to greater collaborative working within the movement as a whole. There are 10 local YMCAs in Northern Ireland and 9 local YMCAs in the Republic. YMCAs vary in size and their programme offer will be dependent on the needs of the local community. Some YMCAs have a strong community engagement role, while others will have specialist health services but the uniting factor is a strong emphasis on promoting youth development through youth work, vocational development, peace building or family support. The matrix at the end of the review shows the general breakdown of local programmes.

YMCA Vision

The work of the YMCA is based on three basic beliefs:

- We believe young people should have opportunities for personal growth and development
- We believe young people should have opportunities that promote their physical and mental well being
- We believe young people should have opportunities to engage with their local communities

Finances

We are pleased to report that even though last year was a time of financial cutbacks National Council through prudent management was able to maintain a level of financial stability. The accounts in Northern Ireland show a loss which is solely due to the large depreciation costs of the new buildings at Greenhill while in the Republic

the accounts for 2012 show a break even situation. The full sets of accounts are available on our website www.ymca-ireland.net.

In Northern Ireland the accounts showed a loss of £155,250. The Greenhill YMCA centre continues to show growth in business and is making a strong cash contribution to the organisation. NI accounts retain cash reserves equivalent to six months operational costs. The ROI 2012 Accounts show a small surplus of €5,976 on a spend of €1,743,467 allowing the maintenance of a cash reserve of 4 months operational costs.

We are grateful to our many partners and supporters for their financial support over the last year. In particular we are appreciative of the core support given by Youth Council of NI and Department of Children and Youth Affairs (RoI).

SIGNATURE PROGRAMMES

STEP

Against the backdrop of continuing high rates of unemployment, YMCA's Support, Training and Enterprise Programme (STEP) continues to make a significant difference in the lives of young people. A "second-chance" education programme, STEP works exclusively with those who have either failed to complete formal education or who have significant personal issues which are blocking their progress. A decision was made to lengthen the programme to a full academic year in order to help young people both gain a full FETAC Level 4 Certificate while also helping them to develop a clear vocational path and address personal issues.

At a policy level during the year, the STEP staff team reviewed how it measured outcomes for young people and after reviewing a number of different methods, a decision was made to introduce the Work Outcomes Star which will help chart and measure outcomes for young people across seven different areas including motivation, social skills and job specific skills. A major advantage of the Outcomes Star is the ability to collect and analyse information centrally because it is administered online.

PAKT

YMCA's Parents and Kids Together (PAKT) programme aims to provide a holistic and integrated approach to meeting the developmental needs of children as well as providing support to parents. Following on from an external evaluation of the programme a new PAKT manual was produced, which describes the theoretical evidence that underpins the model. In describing the goals of the programme, it frames them within a resiliency framework where the emphasis is on the development of self-efficacy, healthy lifestyles and active participation. Alongside the manual, work was completed on introducing a new on-line recording mechanism which has been adopted in all local programmes as well as a new evaluation tool. PAKT also saw the introduction of new management systems which will allow for closer collaboration and sharing of resources between centres. Despite of continued reductions in budgets, PAKT has shown its resiliency in finding new ways of attracting community resources and building social capital. An example of the long-term social capital which it is developing was seen in the first generation of young leaders to emerge from the programme now beginning to volunteer in PAKT itself as well as going on to participate in international leadership opportunities through the wider YMCA movement.

Global and International

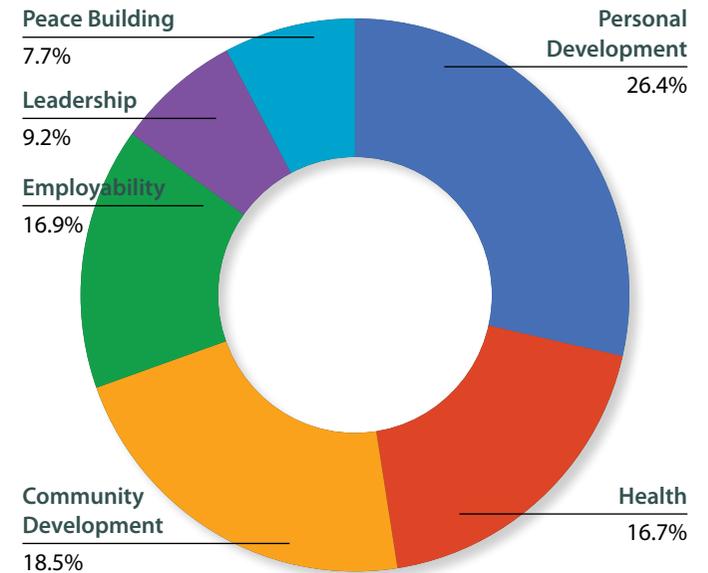
Being a part of an international organisation means that young people, volunteers and staff in the Irish YMCA movement have access to a global network of contacts and opportunities and this was further reinforced by the adoption of YMCA Ireland's International Policy in 2013. At a programme level, this commitment to promoting international values has been reflected in the integration of global justice themes into existing youth work programmes. The links established with the Lusaka Street Children project continued to provide opportunities for groups of Irish young people to make direct contact with their peers in the global south through social media and other formats to explore common issues of concern. The provision of training opportunities for YMCA staff and volunteers in helping to develop their capacity to engage on global justice issues has continued to be a priority as has been the ongoing support offered through mentoring and external networking. The formal partnership with the Lusaka Street Children Project which also involves Y Care International and YMCA Sweden has provided new insights and learning into the realities of supporting and managing an international development project.

Outdoor Education

Outdoor education plays a key role in youth work provision within the YMCA. The use of adventure learning has proved to be highly effective in promoting personal development and supporting other areas of the youth sector curriculum e.g peacebuilding and global youth work. During the last year our Greenhill Centre provided support to local and international groups from a wide variety of backgrounds and learning needs. Approx 9,257 attended the Centre, supported

by an international teams of volunteers from 8 nations. All volunteers completed their OCN 2 qualifications emphasising outdoor education as a medium for youth work and personal development. In addition the Centre has completed its first year under industry standard Adventuremark accreditation. Greenhill is now the centre of YMCA's peacebuilding work within Northern Ireland and in partnership with Youthlink are developing new resources and approaches to this key issue for young people.

Programme Outcomes



PROMOTING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The main focus of YMCA work in Ireland is supporting young people to grow physically, mentally and spiritually. We have been delighted that during visits by National Council staff to local associations across Ireland, the promotion of youth development is being supported and nurtured at all levels and with all ages using youth work methodologies such as youth participation, youth leadership and vocational training. Leadership opportunities for young people are a key priority across YMCAs as they recognise that the young people of today have the potential to be tomorrow's leaders. From the age of 14, young people are given many different ways to engage in leadership and volunteering. One example of this is the Junior Leaders Programme at Larne YMCA aimed at young people aged 14 - 18 where a team of 15 leaders have clocked up an amazing 2,029 volunteer hours since January 2013. The Finding Your Place project, which has been run by Londonderry YMCA for the past number of years has continued to offer opportunities for young people based in Donegal, Londonderry and Tyrone to get involved in a range of leadership opportunities while at the same time developing friendships with peers from across the border. In Greenhill YMCA, the 2013 Assistant Leader Camp (ALC) for 15-17 year olds was over subscribed. Following on from their training, these assistant leaders were able to work alongside the Senior Camp Leaders in various roles throughout each week of Summer Camp. Consequently nearly 500 young people were able to enjoy summer adventure camps at Greenhill YMCA.

Recognising that the YMCA is a world-wide movement, we have been delighted that during 2012/2013, young people have had the opportunity to learn and share with other young people at an international level. At Cork YMCA group of young leaders co-ordinated a Youth in Action training event in Moldova with five

other countries during the summer on the theme "Youth Unemployment and Migration". The Cork group produced a challenging photo exhibition on the issue of people trafficking entitled "Youthful Dreams Shattered". Feedback from this programme was very positive and following on from it, several other community venues have expressed an interest in hosting this exhibition. A further international highlight of the YMCA calendar was a group of twenty young leaders from both parts of the island who took part in YMCA Europe's, Love to Live festival in Prague in August. The event brought together 5000 young people from YMCA movements across Europe as well as from North America.

Over the past year, Ballincollig and Cobh YMCAs have initiated innovative programmes where the emphasis has been on encouraging young people to become creators of their own youth-spaces. Both of these projects have been heavily influenced by the work of the well established Groundfloor project in Cork City YMCA. Another example of innovation, this time using technology, was the Video+ project run by Bandon YMCA which enabled groups of young people to creatively explore and express perspectives on issues affecting them and their peers. It was piloted in 5 West Cork post-primary schools during spring 2013. The conclusion of the process was a public showcase event in a local cinema where over 70 young people came together to present their videos around issues including road safety, bullying and mental health.

Using digital media as a method of exploring current issues with young people has been a recurrent theme in the Co Cork area over the past year, with staff having been trained through the Techspace initiative to help young people move towards becoming creators of digital media. This project was part of the Adobe sponsored Youth Voices initiative. YMCAs in the Co Cork area have also begun to exploit the potential of social media as an alternative way of reaching and interacting with young people. The service regularly uses sponsored stories to target specific groups of young people with one post reaching 49,174 young people.

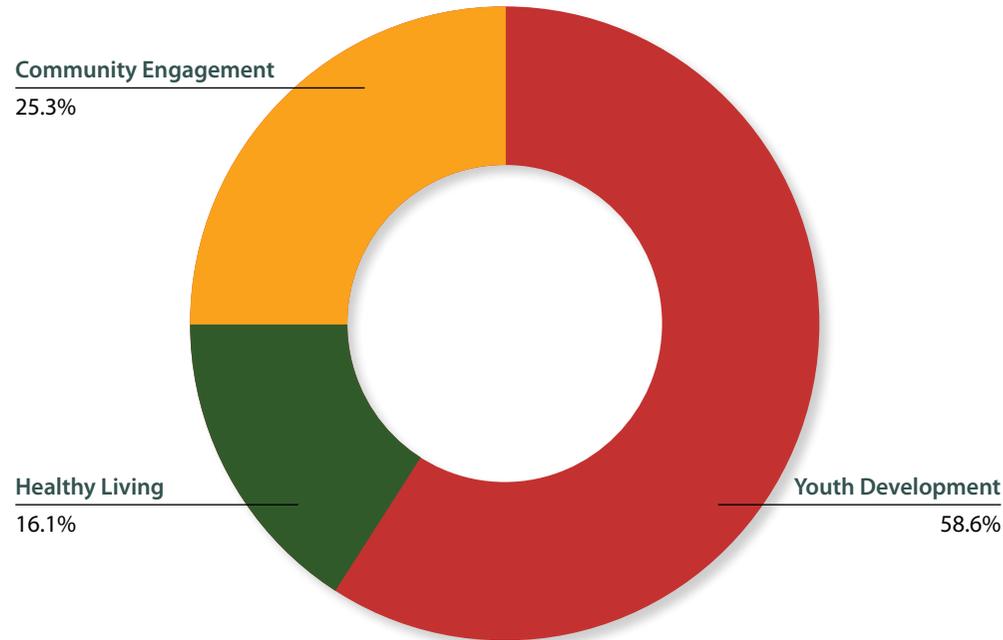
Youth development projects in partnership with schools has continued to be a strong component within many local YMCAs and these continue to show effective outcomes. However, very often YMCAs are engaging with young people who may have left formal education with little or no qualifications. It is this need that forms the basis for the continued development and delivery of training programmes within the YMCA. Programmes such as the STEP programme delivered across the Republic of Ireland, or the Essential Skills training offered at Lisburn YMCA enable young people who have struggled with the formal education system to re-engage with education, develop their social and personal skills and increase their employability.

"I have lived through the troubles and thought I understood pain, but this experience has given me real empathy with those that were directly affected".

One story from Dublin YMCA's STEP programme illustrates the impact a young person's involvement in such a programme can have. A young 24 year old woman Amy (not her real name) joined the programme the day after being released from a drug rehabilitation clinic. While she found adapting to the rigours and disciplines of the programme initially difficult, she quickly came to the realisation that STEP offered her the chance to turn her life around. She subsequently graduated with 8 distinctions. As a result of the course she is currently attending the Trinity Access Programme and hopes to progress onto an Arts Degree next year.



YMCA Main Programme Areas



PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVING

As an organisation the YMCA has long championed the notion of physical, mental and spiritual well-being as central to its work with young people. Indeed health has been consistently identified by local YMCAs over the past decade as a key issue for young people and has remained so over the past 12 months. In some of our local YMCAs, Londonderry, City of Belfast and City of Dublin there continues to be a strong tradition of fitness and sports based approaches to promoting healthy lifestyles among young people. With better promotion of fitness activities for young people we expect to see improvements in the health of their communities.

Local YMCAs have also continued to respond directly to specific local health issues in their communities. An example of this is the Community Drugs Project which is based in Cobh YMCA. It provides much needed support for young people and their families whose lives have become affected by drugs and/or alcohol. During the past year over 70 clients have accessed the range of services the project offers. An encouraging development during the past year was to see three people who had used the service for different reasons and varying lengths of time applying and being accepted onto their first choice college courses. These represent significant personal milestones for all the people involved and are a tangible demonstration of the difference the project can make in a young person's life.

“there isn't much to do in our area but Families Together helps me to spend quality time with my kids every week”.

“doing homework used to be extremely stressful but now isn't stressful at all!”.

Over the past 12 months, Larne, Carrickfergus and North Down YMCAs have all secured funding to deliver 'One-Stop Shop' Health projects which aim to help young people access health information and services in a youth friendly setting. As part of this One Stop Shop health network, Larne and Carrickfergus YMCA's operate the 'Health Hub' for the wider East Antrim Community."

In other YMCAs there has been an emphasis on developing holistic approaches to healthy lifestyles as well as health education and promotion, which are reflected across all programme areas. In recent months, working in partnership with the local Leisure Centre and the Royal Life-Saving Society, enabled Larne YMCA to deliver its first ever Rookie Lifeguarding course. The challenging training aimed to give young people the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to keep themselves and others safe in or around water. Youth Information in Cork City is taking on a strong youth mental wellbeing theme as it collaborates more closely with the well established "Heart 'n Soul" programme. It is also making strides in collaborating with the city's Library Services in a new partnership to reach out to young people in their locality. During the year, Lisburn YMCA, launched the Jigsaw project. This new project aims to address the mental health and practical needs of vulnerable young adults by supporting them in various aspects of their life such as housing, benefits, relationships,

offending, motivation, parenting, self-care, living skills, suicide and self harm through individual and group work.

A further example of this holistic approach to health, is seen in the many family programmes such as Parents And Kids Together (PAKT) projects which operate in Ballincollig, Cobh, Bantry, West Dublin and Dublin YMCAs. In West



Dublin PAKT a group of eight young teenagers brought some sparkling moments into the lives of residents of a local nursing home through the co-facilitation of relaxation sessions. Over a cuppa afterwards, they were able to reflect on the Past, Present and Future of their community with the residents. The project, called 'Live On' went on to win an award of €650 from the Irish Youth Foundation and Starbucks under the innovation category. The staff at the nursing home gave positive feedback saying that residents had benefitted from the positivity of the young people, as well as the physical and relaxation techniques they learned.

(We) 'have had superb feedback from both teachers and pupils alike. Comments have been extremely positive from a pupil perspective who refer to their enthusiasm, passion, engaging activities and patient approach. Staff across the board have referred to their organized, engaged and creative approach. I am extremely glad we decided to partner with the YMCA this year and look forward to this relationship developing over the years to come'.

In North Down YMCA a similar family based programme called Families Together aims to improve social and educational outcomes for families living in areas of social need in Bangor. The project, which emphasises working with children aged 0 to 16 and their families in shared activities, focuses on parenting capacity, educational support and play development. For many families the issue of 'stress' is having a major negative impact on family life and being involved in such programmes can provide much needed support.



2012/13 Highlights

- October 36th AGM YMCA Ireland held in Dublin
- November STEP Conference
- December Community Thanksgiving Evening Greenhill YMCA
- January Work begins on NQSF process
- February Staff training in Outcomes STARS
- March Launch of PAKT Evaluation
- April Lurgan YMCA's new building opens
- May Carrickfergus YMCA's new building opens
- June Techspace Training starts in Co Cork
- July 500 children attend Greenhill YMCA daycamps
- August Prague Festival
- September Successful completion of Phase 1 of NQSF



PROMOTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The third priority of the YMCA movement strategy is promoting community engagement. The YMCA believes that every young person is a valued member of their community with much to contribute as they fulfil their potential. It recognises that young people do not live in isolation, but that they are influenced by their families, their communities and the world around them. There are many examples of how local YMCAs respond to community issues by developing projects which serve to support the wider community. These include After Schools and Day Care provision which can be found at Larne, Dublin and Belfast YMCAs, or the Housing support projects developed by North Down, Dublin and Carrickfergus YMCAs which aim to support the most vulnerable in their communities.

Over the past 12 months, YMCAs in N Ireland have continued to be at the forefront of helping communities deal with the effects of sectarianism and division. Within this area of work YMCAs attempt to build equity, celebrate diversity and promote inclusion with the ultimate aim of creating cohesion and integration across communities. Founded on our commitment to the CRED (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity) strategy, YMCA projects promote equality and the nurturing of mutual respect and regard for all, regardless of religious, political or ethnic background, sexual orientation or physical or mental capacities. As part of it's work in this area, YMCA Ireland and Youthlink NI have worked in partnership to share learning, pool resources, and deliver a range of programmes over the past year. An important aspect of this partnership was the delivery of 'Living With Diversity' (LWD) - an experiential, group work based diversity programme that aims to promote the participants' personal and professional development and equip them with the knowledge, skills and values that will support diversity work in their local contexts.

Often effective community engagement projects are in direct response to ongoing community partnerships and networking. During 2012/ 2013, there have been many examples of positive

community engagement across the movement such as Families Together staff and volunteers from North Down YMCA, engaging with over 50 families in a range of shared programmes and activities. Positive partnerships have been established with North Down Borough Council, SureStart and various local primary schools, churches and community associations. As well as building positive relations between participants and the local community, such projects can also provide the community with opportunities to engage in new ways with the YMCA as evidenced by Portadown YMCA's Summer Scheme Inclusion project. An integral part of the scheme's success was the partnership with the local Health Trust and support networks in the area through which the initial need was identified. It is encouraging to see that the project evolved through the recruitment and training of a team of 8 buddy/mentors who are able to support young people with additional needs to participate in the mainstream programme.

Unfortunately young people are very often on the edge of communities as a result of poor communication or a lack of understanding. However, YMCA projects such as the film making project at Lurgan YMCA which helps young people understand the difference between Social and Antisocial behaviour and how to engage positively with the local community, aim to tackle negative stereotypes. Creative arts have proven to be an excellent medium to allow young people to engage positively with their communities. This has been showcased at Londonderry YMCA which during the 2013 year of City of Culture a group of young people took part in the City wide Music Promise project. Following a week's intensive training in song-writing and performance arts the group went on to participate in the Glasgowbury Festival in the North West. The newly formed One Voice choir was also nominated by Neil Cowley as the official choir of the City of Culture and will be headlining the closing ceremony.

Other examples of local community engagement was the participation of a number of young people from various youth



projects at Dublin YMCA in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. This proved to be an amazing experience for the young people, volunteers and staff involved as it made them feel very much a part of the wider community.

Global youth work projects have continued to be developed across the movement over the past year as an effective way of engaging young people in international issues that may also impact them locally. In Lurgan and Belfast the staff integrated global issues into existing peace building programmes, while in Greenhill staff training was developed to support global work in the summer programme. At North Down the youth leadership team provided global resources and workshops for all the other departments of the local YMCA.

The opening of new purpose-built YMCA facilities in both Carrickfergus and Lurgan, are significant contributions to the development of 'community-hubs'. These would not have been possible without the engagement of local community and other stakeholders.



“they were glad to get to know the people that they had judged before, behind the hoody”.

“this (Rookie Life Guard project) is the best thing my daughter has done this year – a great boost for her confidence which is just what she needed.”

LOCAL PROGRAMME MATRIX

Youth Development

Healthy Living

Community Engagement

Location	Youth Work	Global Youth Work	Youth information	Vocational Training	Participation Leadership training	Health Promotion	Schools work	Drugs Education	Family work	Sports & Fitness	Community Development	Peace Building	Volunteer development	Day Care	Housing
Ballincollig	Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ	Δ			Δ						
Bantry									Δ						
Bandon		Δ	Δ		Δ										
Belfast	Δ	Δ			Δ	Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	
Carrick	Δ				Δ	Δ	Δ		Δ			Δ	Δ		
Cobh	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ						
Cork	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ							Δ
Donegal				Δ	Δ										
Dublin	Δ			Δ	Δ	Δ			Δ	Δ				Δ	Δ
Greenhill	Δ	Δ			Δ					Δ		Δ	Δ		
Larne	Δ				Δ	Δ	Δ		Δ			Δ	Δ		
Londonderry	Δ			Δ	Δ		Δ		Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ		
Lisburn	Δ			Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ	Δ				Δ		
Lurgan	Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ					Δ		Δ	Δ		
North Down	Δ	Δ		Δ	Δ	Δ			Δ			Δ	Δ		Δ
Portadown	Δ				Δ		Δ								
West Dublin	Δ				Δ				Δ				Δ		

YMCA Centres

Location	phone	Address	Contact Person
Ballincollig	021 4877770	Unit 1 A Innishmore Ind Estate, Ballincollig Co Cork	Miriam Mc Auliffe
Bantry	027 51461	C / O YMCA Unit 1 A Innishmore Enterprise Park Ballincollig	Una Chambers
Bandon	023 8844009	Glasslyn Rd, Bandon Co Cork	TJ Hourihan
Belfast	0800 023 8158	58 Knightsbridge Park Belfast BT9 5EH	Howard Davy
Carrick	028 9335 5890	30-34 Irish Quarter West Carrickfergus, BT38 8AT	Ivor Mitchell
Cobh	021 4814060	8 Westbeach Cobh Co Cork	James Bilson
Cork	021 4270187	11/12 Marlboro St Cork	Gef Dickson
Donegal	074 9161485	Unit A3 Enterprise Business Centre, Letterkenny Co Donegal	Stewart Morris
Dublin	01 4782607	Aungier St, Dublin 2	Paul McDonald
Greenhill	02843723172	Donard Park Newcastle BT33 OGR	Kenny Baxter
Larne	028 2827 9331	34A Pound St, Larne BT40 1SD	Joy McNally
Londonderry	028 7130 1662	51 Glenshane Rd, Londonderry BT47 3SF	Willie Lamrock
Lisburn	028 9267 0918	28 Market Square, Lisburn BT28 1AG	Pauline McMullan
Lurgan	028 3832 1025	4 Carnegie Street Lurgan BT66 8AS	Hugo Dale
North Down	028 9145 4290	39 Queens Parade Bangor BT20 3BJ	Stuart Buchanan
Portadown	028 3833 2321	80 Jervis Street, Portadown, BT62 3HD	Bradley Henderson
West Dublin	01 4624798	Brookfield Enterprise Park, Tallaght Co Dublin	Brian Murtagh
National Council NI	02890449316	Donard Park Newcastle BT33 OGR	Stephen Turner
National Council Rol	021 4850015	Unit 1 A Innishmore Ind Estate, Ballincollig Co Cork	Ivan McMahon





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Youth development **health living** community engagement

