



## **YMCA STEP (Support Training and Enterprise Programme)**

### *INTRODUCTION*

*YMCA STEP was launched in 1989 as a pre-vocational training programme for 18-25 year olds who were both educationally disadvantaged and long term unemployed. In January 2000 it was mainstreamed within the Early School Leavers' provision as a 'Second Chance' programme. Early school leavers' frequently remain on the margins of the labour force often hindered by weak interpersonal skills, poor qualifications, a lack of confidence and consequent poor motivation. The Economic and Social Research Institute stated in 2006 that the likelihood of people finding work decreases the earlier they leave school, with almost 70% of school leavers' who have no qualifications being unemployed after leaving school.*

### *MISSION STATEMENT*

*Within the framework of early school leaver provision, YMCA STEP encourages and assists young people to gain relevant formal education qualifications as well as developing their vocational and personal skills. In addition, YMCA STEP places a strong emphasis on accessing progression options through employment and education. YMCA STEP aims to provide the opportunity for young people to identify and overcome personal barriers to learning and employment in an open, creative and inclusive learning environment, developing young people in body, mind and spirit.*

### *A STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL (TRAINING) AIMS / YMCA STEP GOALS*

- 1. To respond creatively in supporting the progression of personal, learning and employment needs of participants.*
- 2. To help young people to recognise, understand and address their physical, mental and spiritual needs.*
- 3. To resource the development and maintenance of constructive relationships within personal, social and working lives.*

4. To enable young people to participate responsibly and creatively in identifying owning and realising their learning goals.
5. To encourage participants to become actively engaged in their local communities and YMCAs.

## *STRATEGIC GOALS*

YMCA STEP aims to:

- *Encourage and assist young people to gain formal educational qualifications and skills, as well as providing for their vocational and personal development. In doing so, place a strong emphasis on the progression options for early school leavers' and develop initiatives that help them progress their personal learning and employment goals.*
- *Develop leadership roles of YMCA STEP participants into local associations, the wider YMCA Movement, and the development of the YMCA STEP programme.*
- *Assist young adult immigrants to obtain vocational qualifications/employment and assist their integration into Irish Society*
- *Promote opportunities and activities for staff to encourage the exploration of spirituality with trainees.*
- *Build the staff team to ensure mutual co-operation and promote a Best Practice culture and explore opportunities to share expertise and synergies between the various centres.*
- *Continue to review the methodologies used on the programme, in consultation with the stakeholders, to ensure that it remains relevant to the needs of trainees, the local community it serves and the Local Association that sponsors it.*
- *Ensure curricula, assessment processes and delivery mechanisms are kept current and in compliance with YMCA Standards, FETAC QAF, ECDL and any other certifying bodies.*

## *METHODOLOGY*

*The YMCA STEP Conference (held twice yearly) will continue to provide a forum in which to review policy and practice, in addition, relevant stakeholders will be consulted through small working groups on relevant initiatives. Staff training will be resourced to engage trainers in learning opportunities to keep them in-line with Best Practice. The National YMCA STEP Co-ordinator will engage with local staff, General Secretaries and Management committees to develop awareness and promote local initiatives. YMCA STEP will continue to be represented at the annual Youthreach Co-ordinators' Conference and at other appropriate forums. YMCA STEP will promote opportunities and activities to develop leadership skills of trainees and allow for opportunities of expressing faith in a post-modern context.*

## *RESOURCES*

*The support work will be the primary responsibility of the National YMCA STEP Co-ordinator assisted by local Management. It will be funded by the Department of Education and Science with assistance from the European Social Fund.*

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