

An interim evaluation of the Curriculum Development Unit



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Commisioned by the Management Committee of the Curriculum Development Unit



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1.0 Introduction

Following a meeting with Mr. John McCormick (Y.C.N.I.) it was agreed that an evaluation was to be carried out on a limited number of areas of work undertaken by the Northern Ireland Youth Work Curriculum Development Unit. An independent evaluation of the progress made by the Curriculum Development Unit had been carried out by R.G. Consultants in May 2003. This had been done by circulation of a self-completion questionnaire to all registered youth groups with the Education and Library Boards and with non-registered groups responding through Youth Net “E-pipe” mailing. In addition a number of semi-structured interviews with key youth service personnel and two focus group discussions took place.

Seen by many in the Youth Service as a significant and positive development, there was recognition for the need to have a C.D.U., which would enhance and support the diversity of youth work in Northern Ireland. There were however, some views expressed that the development of partnerships between the statutory and voluntary sectors needed to be strengthened and that lack of cohesion in the youth work sector would hinder the work and potential influence of the C.D.U

The independent evaluation reported on the very positive establishment of the Management Committee of the C.D.U. and the partnerships that have been established to progress curriculum initiatives. It was stated in the evaluation that this **“has, in the view of many interviewees, contributed to drawing together the diverse interests and partners within the sector. It was felt that this had further developed the interdependence of working partnerships to the benefit of the sector as a whole, whilst enabling key partners to retain their independence”**.

From the 362 completed questionnaire returns there was opportunity to evaluate the impact of the C.D.U. Newsletter, awareness of the updated Youth Work: ‘A Model for Effective Practice’ 2003, access to the C.D.U web-site and attendance at C.D.U organised events. The overall thrust of the independent evaluation report was that while the C.D.U had achieved much in a short period of time, there was still much to be done in relation to awareness raising, developing practical curriculum and programme resources, developing comparative materials and exploring the correlation between Youth Work: ‘A Model for Effective Practice’ and other models of youth work. Also in strengthening partnerships between statutory and voluntary sectors and ensuring that support is available to continue the process of developing the diverse curriculum needs of the youth sector.

1.1 Current Interim Evaluation

In January 2005 Converge Consultancy was asked to carry out evaluation of the C.D.U. in relation to:

- Partnership working, looking specifically at the support given to two Education & Library Board areas in the cascade of Youth Work: ‘A Model for Effective Practice’.
- New areas of work in supporting the Youth Forum with development of a young person’s version of the curriculum model and the development of a number of Regional Practice and Policy Seminars organised jointly between Youth Action Northern Ireland, the University of Ulster and the C.D.U.



- Working with other agencies such as the Health Promotion Agency and the Northern Ireland Consumer Council to improve the communication strategies and materials directed at young people.

In addition, three interviews were carried out with youth workers who had made use of the C.D.U. library and a focus group meeting with a group of full-time youth workers to discuss issues in relation to training and communication between C.D.U and the field.

Meetings were held with key contacts for the B.E.L.B, the S.E.L.B and the researcher attended a training session organised by the C.D.U. for full-time workers in training as part of the cascade training for the B.E.L.B A focus group meeting involving six of the workers participating in the cascade training was also held and evaluations from this will be commented on.

Extensive interviews were also held with representatives of the Northern Ireland Health Promotion Agency and the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland to assess the level of progress made in joint working initiatives.

A meeting with Youth Action Northern Ireland was used to examine the process developed to take forward many of the issues related to practitioners being able to share practice and influence policy. This specific work focused around a number (2) of the Regional Practice and Policy Seminars that have taken place (with two more to follow).

A discussion was also held with The Northern Ireland Youth Forum to assess the progress made into the production of a young person's version of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice'.

1.2 Report on Progress – February 2005 Summary

By far the most prevalent view expressed by virtually every person consulted with during this interim evaluation, was that they were very satisfied by the quality and extent of support provided by the C.D.U. Given the short period of time since its establishment in April 2002 and the breadth of its remit, the C.D.U supported by the widely representative Management Committee and key contacts within the Youth Service, has made great strides in promoting the enhancement and support of curriculum development in youth work in Northern Ireland.

The very extensive and positive feedback from all of the individual youth workers, youth officers, regional organisations and the voluntary sector representatives consulted through this interim evaluation has provide evidence of the excellent work that continues to be carried out by the C.D.U.



2.0 Working in Partnership

2.1 Health Promotion Agency for N. Ireland

For many workers the area of young men's issues has been a challenging one and there is need for resources and training opportunities to help address the stark needs that confront many communities. The Health Promotion Agency has been working with an advisory group, including members representing Opportunity Youth, the Rainbow Project, Youth Action, the Men's Project and the Curriculum Development Unit, to develop resources and training for workers to deliver these resources. This work has been very productive and marks a significant breakthrough into real partnership working between agencies, which has often been talked about but rarely produces real results for the constituent organisations and their clients / users.

Partnership working requires a real and significant input of resources sometimes even when progress is slow and processes are painstakingly developed. The need for agencies to put their ideas, opinions and resources on offer is often a step too far for individual organisations which have other priorities to attend to. It should not be taken for granted that progress is automatic when partnership working begins. Not only has a useful model of partnership working been achieved but also concrete outcomes of the work in the development of the leaflet and the training resource for youth workers.

Linda Barclay Director of Programmes at Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland is in no doubt about the vital contribution made by the Curriculum Development Unit in the development of the young men's mental health leaflet **"R U healthy in UR head?"** and the manual developed to train workers to be able to work more effectively with young men. Linda states that the C.D.U.'s involvement in the planning, creative input, knowledge of key issues, commitment to the work and investment in developing resources for youth workers was crucial to the success of the project. She goes on to say that

"We had the opportunity to produce a regional resource which contributed to research, training and development of staff while at the same time improving the networking among key organisations which can impact on young men's health".

The Health Promotion Agency has now been able to produce new resources that can take advantage of the strategically placed network to make the biggest impact with the training resources that have accompanied the work. Having the materials launched at the Inter-board Youth Work Conference in March 2005 will ensure the best positioning and marketing of the material to the audience that can optimise the use of the materials with young people.

The C.D.U. according to Linda Barclay has been able to

"establish its credibility, add to strategic thinking, provide expertise, influence increased network, create new resources and provide the opportunity to market and place the new resources at the right location".



The potential for future developments to influence the personal, social and emotional education of young people is greatly increased by partnership working of this nature. All public agencies are working to the **“Investing in Health”** Strategy (2002) and Linda Barclay suggested it was imperative for the C.D.U. to be given the opportunity to consolidate the work they had initiated. All too often the real gains from partnership working were not realised because of short-term funding of organisations.

Linda regarded the C.D.U. as being at the forefront of developing resources and systems that can really impact on a wide range of other service providers such as Health Care Trusts, the media, schools, further and higher education. The C.D.U was, as she put it

“on the pulse beat of what young people need”.

Linda saw the regional remit of the C.D.U. as absolutely essential and its direct input into the development of web-sites, schools initiatives, competitions and research projects as something that should be developed over a long-term period. She also stated that she would be willing to assist the Management Committee of the C.D.U in any way that might formalise the links established through this initial partnership working.

2.2 General Consumer Council for N. Ireland

Following the securing of Executive Programme Funds, the General Consumer Council was able to undertake a project that was directed at raising the level of consumer education with under-represented groups such as young people. The project manager Pat McNally made contact with a member of the Education Training Inspectorate who put her in touch with the C.D.U.

Some initial ideas to make contact with young people were via possible web-sites but this was not developed as it would not target those who could not access the internet. The linkage with the C.D.U. enabled the General Consumer Council to begin to think of the optimum method of reaching young people and to develop a resource specifically for youth workers to take the message to young people.

A survey conducted by the General Consumer Council had shown that while the majority of young people said they were willing to stand up for themselves, in relation to consumer issues, they lacked the knowledge and skills to do so. This lack of knowledge, awareness and confidence inhibits young people from being effective consumers and often many young people do not complain about faulty goods and services. The spending power of young people today makes them an extremely important group of consumers and the General Consumer Council is keen to take action which empowers young people to be aware of and access their rights as a consumer.

In order to get this message across, the General Consumer Council commissioned the Nerve Centre in Londonderry to produce a DVD which would get the message across to young people in a fun and informative manner. This was not an easy option and required much work in devising the script, developing the resource pack and “youth-proofing” the contents. It was at this point the C.D.U. became involved in an advisory panel and in the words of the project manager Pat McNally



“made a significant input to the quality assurance of the DVD and training pack. It is also fair to say that the production of the DVD was a major project which was greatly assisted by the intervention of the C.D.U.”.

Again, the importance of networking and the pivotal role that the C.D.U. can play was brought into sharp focus when it was agreed the DVD would be launched at the Interboard Youth Service Conference in March 2005. The project has come to fruition with the help of C.D.U and Bill Osborne (Deputy Chair of General Consumer Council N.I.).

Pat McNally identified the important processes which were developed through the production of the DVD and the youth worker resource pack in

- **expertise in communication with young people.**
- **awareness of young person’s consumer issues.**
- **collaborative networks.**
- **personnel available to work in groups.**
- **vision and foresight.**
- **ability to make contacts with young people.**

The importance of these working relationships was underlined by Pat McNally who stated that

“the intervention of the C.D.U. ensured a high quality outcome, improved opportunity for professional development, gave young consumers a real advocate, opened up more ideas for developing curriculum and set up opportunities to look at further collaboration on consumer issues”

This project was rated very highly by Pat McNally who stated that it was imperative for joint working like this to take place if we are to reach the target audience in a way that was meaningful. The expertise from the C.D.U could serve as a possible gateway to reach other consumers within the youth sector. Materials produced and networks developed would be available to a wide range of professionals working in the educational field thus maximising the possible impact and benefit to young people.



3.0 Cascade of Youth Work: ‘A Model for Effective Practice’

3.1 B.E.L.B

Having met with Trevor Murphy, key contact for B.E.L.B, it was agreed that part of the evaluation would look at how the cascade of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' had been introduced and supported within the B.E.L.B. It was also agreed that the evaluator would attend one of the training sessions for eighteen full-time staff in training at a residential session.

Trevor stated that support from C.D.U. staff had been excellent and the training events which had been completed at Delamont for fifteen staff, including eight senior workers, had been highly rated in evaluations from participants. Key individuals involved in O.C.N. training were able to disseminate the information to staff in training, and awareness-raising took place for staff based within youth units. A major drive to inform and support staff in understanding and implementing the model was initiated by the B.E.L.B. who consulted widely with staff on how best the cascading could be supported, and what objectives or outcomes would be achieved.

This crucial process of training and support for key personnel raised the importance of the implementation of Youth Work: ‘A Model for Effective Practice’ enabling people to have the confidence to discuss issues. It also appears that given the level of activity within the B.E.L.B. Youth Service, there has been a distinct change of emphasis on ownership of the cascading. This process of assimilation of the model into mainstream practice is evidenced at all levels throughout the B.E.L.B Youth Service and is seen in training, supervision, unit-level, strategic direction and the drive to have young people more involved in the Youth Service in Belfast.

This commitment to the implementation of the model was evidenced by the residential for thirty qualified staff which was attended by the C.D.U. staff and the Education and Training Inspectorate in May 2003. This training enabled full-time staff to look closely at how best to implement the model within their setting and how to help part-time staff understand the processes.

Following these first stages in support and training, the B.E.L.B undertook a review to identify any gaps in their provision and plot the way forward. It was agreed the next phase of support would be directed at the group of eighteen full-time staff in training which would take the total number of full-time workers trained in the B.E.L.B to fifty four.

3.1.2 Residential Training - 1st & 2nd February 2005

A two-day training course was planned and delivered by C.D.U. staff with eighteen full-time workers in training plus three senior B.E.L.B. training staff in attendance. The particular session the evaluator attended was a session on **‘exploring the core principle of acceptance and understanding of others’**. A full evaluation was completed at the end of the residential and is available from the C.D.U. However, to summarise the particular session the evaluator attended will give an insight into how the training was conducted.

The C.D.U. staff had prepared the exercise “Martians and Neptunians” which was a derivation of **“An Ideal Island”** with two participating groups having to draw up rules by which the island had to



be organised. In drawing out the issues emerging from the exercise, the trainees were able to look at key issues in acceptance and understanding of others in a way which was clear and informative.

The exercise was challenging, participative and engendered intense feelings and group opinions which were identified and dealt with by the trainers. Communication was good, the task was clearly laid out and whilst there was much friendly banter and possible disruptive influence, the trainers coped well at all times.

Feedback (in the form of a focus group) from six youth workers following the session revealed that:

- **the training approach was fresh / innovative**
- **participation and fun was inbuilt**
- **superb materials and support were available**
- **trainers had a recent and relevant youth work experience**
- **trainers helped develop ideas**
- **trainers were open to being challenged.**

A very important reflection from the participants was that in having been consulted at a previous session at the Hammer Resource Centre they felt their ideas had been listened to, acted upon and they found the experience a real morale booster.

Other relevant comments stressed the relevance of the training, well-produced materials, involvement of everyone and usefulness of the materials for working with part-time staff. Some comments directly from the participants were:

- **“Young people would have lapped this up.”**
- **“Model is more understandable to put into practice.”**
- **“Should management not be doing this?”**
- **“A Model for Effective Practice” should be compulsory, just like Child Protection.”**
- **“When I read “A Model for Effective Practice”, I did not get it, but now I do.”**
- **“The trainers have been there and done it and know what it is like to be close to the work.”**

If the evaluation of the **“full-time workers in training”** of the C.D.U. staff appears to be somewhat glowing, this is further supported by the formal evaluation from the participants collated at the conclusion of the residential.

3.1.3 Evaluation of Residential

In evaluating the residential with the eighteen full-time workers in training from B.E.L.B., the Curriculum Development Unit staff used a questionnaire containing twenty-four questions. These questions covered aspects of:



- meeting objectives
- personal expectations
- preparation for cascade delivery
- planning the next step
- content of materials
- facilitation, style and input
- understanding of core principles
- support provided by C.D.U.
- learning that can be applied to unit
- any topic not covered

The responses from the participants were exceptionally good with virtually every question scoring eighteen responses as **“fully achieved”**. The comments from the participants demonstrated the quality of the training undertaken and how the cascading of the model is being made relevant and practical for the workers.

3.2 S.E.L.B

Within the S.E.L.B there was again a change of emphasis from cascading ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’ to one of embedding the key processes and concepts into the youth work practice. This embedding has not been only in the organisation of training conferences or raising awareness, but in the systematic engagement of senior youth workers, area youth officers, full-time units, outdoor education team and opportunities for people to become very familiar with implementing ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’.

This was complimented by launches in all divisions of ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’ and a conference for management committee members, part-time staff and volunteers from the non-full-time units within the S.E.L.B area. This event took place in Armagh and was a main feature report in the June 2004 edition of Curriculum Development News. For the forty delegates it was an opportunity to have an in-depth understanding of the core principles of the youth service and examine how they might incorporate the principles into their youth club programmes.

Another part of the conference was to access a range of support services available to youth organisations and visit a stand to make personal contact with each service provider. The participants were then given the chance to network with each other so that ideas and programmes could be learned about and experiences shared.

The role of the C.D.U was to support the conference financially and work as part of the delivery team on the day. The Testing Values & Beliefs session delivered by the C.D.U was commented on by Angela Taylor, key contact for the S.E.L.B, who stated that it was possibly the best training session she ever attended and engaged the group superbly. In the past there had been a more theoretical approach to training and there was some doubt about the relevance of ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’ particularly with part-time staff. This conference was able to demonstrate the embedding of the core principles in a very practical way that people could understand.

Angela Taylor stated that in the early days of the launch of the model there had been too much focus on the theoretical aspects, whereas now it was being seen as a very practical way to give young



people effective personal and social development through the core principles. Within the S.E.L.B they were developing examples of practice across the continuum of youth work as models of practice that could be shared with others.

This would give practical examples of what can work, how ideas can be developed and how the model can be used in different ways. Proposals being discussed include developing a common format, possible financial support to help critical reflection on practice and support to write up case-studies on how young people are participating in various youth work settings.

This should prove to be valuable for S.E.L.B and can also be disseminated to the wider youth service in due course. This is underlining the pro-active approach taken by the S.E.L.B in relation to best use of the C.D.U to promote the embedding of youth work policy.

Further evidence to support the embedding of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' **“ was found in the S.E.L.B's drive to influence the training in the introduction to youth work”**. This clearly demonstrates the central importance of finding realistic ways to improve practice and then being able to include this approach at all levels throughout the service.

Angela Taylor believes that the C.D.U played a vital role, established credibility, gave status to the work and helped articulate a vision for the youth service. The enhanced communication through Curriculum Development News partnership working and opportunities to be creative were all seen as very positive. Some uncertainty was expressed about the role of the University in promoting 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' and was seen as a possible area for future development. This was seen as particularly important for the induction of new full-time staff into the work.

3.2.1 Focus on Participation

Currently the S.E.L.B is focusing on participation and has established a strategy group to support the embedding of this work. Included in the strategy group are the Inspectorate, the Youth Forum, voluntary youth groups and the C.D.U. Aideen McCormick (S.E.L.B) is leading the programme and hopes to develop a modular induction pack which will include the ethos, principles, issues and ideas for skills based training with examples of good practice included. The potential role of the C.D.U is being discussed and may include advising on how practitioners can provide evidence or indicators of their achievements and how progress made can be accredited.

3.3 Progress Report from N.E.E.L.B, W.E.L.B and S.E.E.L.B

3.3.1 S.E.E.L.B

While not in the original remit of the review of the C.D.U, the three Education & Library Boards mentioned above were asked to comment on the progress of the Cascade Training for 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice'.

The S.E.E.L.B has been cascading 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' progressively over the past year. Following the launch and a one day training day provided by the C.D.U, the S.E.E.L.B staff team devised an action plan for the further dissemination of the 'Youth Work - A Model for



Effective Practice’ across the five divisional areas – Ards, Castlereagh, Down, Lisburn and North Down.

The first stage included a launch in the S.E.E.L.B area which involved a range of key representatives from full time and part time units. Young people were also present and provided some excellent examples of the model in practice. Following this the document was also launched at five local seminars in the five divisional areas. This involved youth workers from Level 1 and Level 2 units.

In order to focus the training and make the model user friendly and relevant to part time youth workers and as part of the second stage, full time youth workers collated a training pack which was appropriate for delivery to part time staff. One day training seminars for part time staff in full time units were delivered. This was generally done on an individual unit level although three smaller full time units in Castlereagh division did combine to deliver the training.

The third stage is also now complete. Full time youth workers are cascading the training to part time youth workers in charge of Level 2 units and following this, a seminar will be provided for Level 1 units in each of the five divisions. This should come to a close in May 2005.

The model has been progressively embedded in youth work practice across the S.E.E.L.B and continues to be further explored through other training and curriculum development opportunities. Whilst the model is quite different from the original ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’ and not as ‘prescriptive’, the cascade training has given all staff involved an opportunity to explore their practice and examine and test their work with peers. The opportunities for critical reflective practice are welcomed by all youth workers, full time and part time.

3.3.2 N.E.E.L.B

The N.E.E.L.B devised a strategy for embedding Youth Work: ‘A Model for Effective Practice’ within the Board’s Youth Service in June 2003. This document detailed the targets identified and achieved by the N.E.E.L.B Youth Service staff in partnership with the C.D.U. Since 2003 a number of “mini launches” complementing existing area and local events were used to ensure that the strategy was being embedded within the field.

Specific training events were organised for Youth Officers, Residential Staff, and full-time Youth Worker Teams. Cascade awareness training for 10 key workers was also organised and a new induction pack for full time staff was produced. There was also youth work course resource materials designed for trainers who were delivering a range of courses throughout the Board’s area.

A very useful part time youth worker induction pack was also produced which enabled part time staff to understand and implement the strategy. In addition some “**user friendly packs**” were created by the C.D.U for part time youth workers and young people.

At various training events the C.D.U staff have provided inputs to unit training sessions for registered youth organisations on general awareness raising and specific areas of ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’.



A new set of objectives have been set for the period 2005 – 2006 which include a pilot on principles and practice ‘Participation by Young People’ Course which includes resources and promotional materials. Although there is much evidence to highlight the importance of training events, resources and support from C.D.U staff, it is also evident that the embedding of the key concepts within ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’ has taken place within the N.E.E.L.B area. Most recently an evaluation of the Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus area by the Department’s Inspectorate has shown evidence of excellent work on the ground which is based on ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’.

3.3.3 W.E.L.B

The W.E.L.B has participated in the launches and cascading of ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’ in 2003/2004. The first stage involved launches in May 2003 primarily to over thirty full-time staff. The second stage included a full day input at the full time youth worker and officer conference June 2003 (approximately 60 staff). This was then followed up in autumn 2003 with the identification of 15 workers in the North West of the board area and the completion of cascade awareness raising training with them, which they then cascaded to full and part-time units for which they had direct responsibility.

The W.E.L.B worker’s were instrumental in requesting that the document and supporting materials and presentations be made available in a CD Rom version, to improve the quality and effectiveness of the cascade. The C.D.U responded and this material is available on CD Rom and is also used within the OCN training materials.

In 2005/2006 the W.E.L.B have been in discussion with the unit about jointly planning and delivering regional resource fairs which would increase access to curriculum resources for workers and youth units in the area. These resources fairs would also provide the basis for delivering short seminars to share youth work practice and reinforce awareness of ‘Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice’.



4.0 Development of Regional Practice and Policy Seminars in Youth Work

This example of partnership working was initiated by Youth Action Northern Ireland in partnership with the Youth and Community Work Department at the University of Ulster and the C.D.U and the Y.M.C.A. For Martin McMullan, Area Basic Strategy Co-ordinator, the key to successful working must be with a range of partners including young people to ensure youth service support and engagement of young people.

The voluntary sector has played a vital role in developing training and methodologies to contribute to the understanding of youth work and see the opportunity to share practice as a key component of what they do. Involving the C.D.U. has been a very successful element in the development of the regional seminars according to Martin McMullan, who believes that:

“the C.D.U. has played a key role in the project with technical expertise, knowledge of youth work practice and the ability to disseminate information through networks which are in existence”.

The very active style of involvement of the C.D.U and its dynamic contribution in reflecting openly on how we make progress was welcomed greatly by Martin and YouthAction. This area of critical reflection was something that came up on numerous occasions and the sharing of practice amongst organisations was highlighted as a key process for the youth service.

There was also recognition that the relationship between voluntary and statutory sectors of the youth service was developing in a positive way and real progress had been made. The C.D.U. can continue to support the process of enhancing relationships particularly in sharing information, utilising mailing lists and invitations to events. However, it is crucial that the Education and Library Boards give consideration to maximise the inclusion of the voluntary sector, where, in the case of Y.A.N.I., over 200 constituent groups are involved.

On a practical level, Martin believed that even more transparency is needed in how resources can be accessed, how relationships between organisations can be enhanced and how we develop our thinking. The C.D.U. can assist in the development of key processes by the following:

- **encouraging critical reflection;**
- **publishing good practice;**
- **developing training materials;**
- **utilising multi-media resources;**
- **web-site development;**
- **library services to youth workers;**
- **young persons archive;**
- **partnership development;**
- **ensuring key role for voluntary groups.**



One of the important reflections made by Martin was that the C.D.U. has been able to add to practical development, has been open to change, embraced ideas and contributions from the field, was extremely creative and helped to bench mark important developments for the youth service. Much progress has been made and lessons learned, but much still remains to be done. The sharing of practice and developing partnerships within an inclusive approach must be reinforced and constantly kept at the forefront of the youth service agenda.



5.0 Use of C.D.U. Library

5.1 Worker A - Area Youth Worker, B.E.L.B

This worker reported that he had been planning a multi-cultural training event in Belfast and was having difficulties in sourcing materials for the event. Following his contacting the C.D.U. he was able to order one hundred and fifty leaflets which the C.D.U sourced from the National Youth Agency. These were supplied free of charge and proved to be an excellent source of information on different faiths, diverse cultures and styles of living. The worker had contacted the Community Relations Council but could not find the appropriate material, however through his contact with C.D.U the appropriate materials were found. The worker is planning to make further use of the library service.

5.2 Worker B - Area Youth Worker, N.E.E.L.B.

For this worker there were two distinct aspects of the C.D.U. library that had been very useful. Firstly he had made use of the library for a young men's project, receiving material and training exercises which were extremely useful. He found the variety and quality of the resources excellent and the topics were very relevant. Secondly the worker stated that in completing a Master's Degree, his literature review was greatly enhanced by usage of the C.D.U library especially with materials on participation. This C.D.U library service and the Curriculum Development News were well known throughout the team of workers in his area and some young people would read the Curriculum Development News on a regular basis.

5.3 Worker C - Outreach / Youth Worker, N.E.E.L.B

This worker found the C.D.U. library extremely useful in relation to sourcing information, copying materials, examples of good practice and being able to borrow copies of books when required. The information was also very **"hands on"** and reflected much about up-to-date work. There was also the view that the C.D.U understood what youth workers needed and this was extremely useful as workers did not have the time to make extensive searches of vast quantities of literature.

Being able to ask for help and receive it from experienced youth workers who knew what could work, was an excellent service. The key was that the C.D.U. was familiar with the various themes and key word searches and they could direct the worker to this with minimal fuss. It was also seen as vital that the library opened up a great potential for a two way process where the field could send articles and project information that could inform practice. The body of knowledge that was now accessible underlined the importance of developing ideas, resources and methodologies which showed that the youth service was working to a curriculum for the personal social development of young people.



6.0 Developing Young Person's Version of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice'

Following discussions between Johnny Parks of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and the C.D.U. it was agreed that a proposal for young people to develop a version of the Model for Effective Practice should be submitted to the C.D.U Management Committee. This was agreed in principle and the young people were asked to comment on the existing model and where changes were felt needed to be made, they should suggest them.

The present position is that two qualified youth workers have been identified to support a group of 15 young people who will undergo residential training with the outcome of producing an initial draft of the Young Person's 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice'.

When completed, a further sixty young people will be consulted about the draft proposal and the final document will eventually be submitted to the C.D.U. The timescale for this work is likely to be completed by September 2005. The C.D.U has been supportive of the participation of young people throughout the youth service and has advocated on their behalf, although the Youth Forum feel that young people need to be more involved with particular reference to the C.D.U Management Committee and that while difficulties exist, these should be overcome.

Further positive comments regarding the Curriculum Development News were made by Johnny Parks of the Youth Forum who regarded this as a step in the right direction to publicise the participation of young people right throughout the youth service.



7.0 Conclusions

In analysing responses from all participants in the interim evaluation of the C.D.U. there was evidence of the following:

- I. positive and significant developments in the embedding of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' have been clearly evidenced by Senior Management, Youth Officers and Youth Workers of the two E.L.B's as previously outlined.
- II. excellent partnership working in relation to the C.D.U delivering training, producing materials, supporting the cascading process that has now become a central feature of the work of the B.E.L.B and the S.E.L.B's Youth Services.
- III. the development of resource material by the C.D.U which is being utilised by youth workers following their own training.
- IV. extremely positive feedback on the quality and relevance of training for staff on cascading events. Sessions evaluated both by B.E.L.B and S.E.L.B staff when C.D.U personnel were involved rated as excellent.
- V. development of partnerships which proved excellent vehicles for production of resources, information and opportunities for young people.
- VI. development of strategic partnerships which enabled members of organisations combine their expertise, resources and networks to reach a broader audience.
- VII. technical skills in training methodologies, communication strategies and advisory role.
- VIII. practical approach to helping youth workers understand the theoretical basis of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' and the development of resource materials and dissemination of best practice.
- IX. engaging with other partners in health and consumer rights to ensure that young people are being considered when policies and programmes are being developed.
- X. having expertise and knowledge in relation to communicating with, advocating for and working with staff within the youth service.
- XI. establishing a credibility within the statutory and voluntary sectors of the youth service and a positive programme to be inclusive in its work.
- XII. promoting best practice issues within the youth service through dissemination of material, advocating critical reflection and development of library service.
- XIII. has underpinned the continued professional development for the youth service by developing curricula, sharing practice, articulating objectives and gives relevance to the theoretical framework used by the youth service.
- XIV. has promoted research and education within the youth service by development of library facilities and publishing reviews and critiques of work undertaken.



8.0 Recommendations

1. The C.D.U. having established itself in the past three years should be further supported and mainstreamed into the structure of the youth service in Northern Ireland.
2. The C.D.U. should publish a proposal on small grants and financial support outlining clearly how groups can access this support.
3. The C.D.U. should continue its emphasis on making the youth service inclusive by encouraging input and involvement of all groups, especially within the voluntary sector.
4. The C.D.U. should seek to develop links with University of Ulster to explore the further development of 'Youth Work - A Model for Effective Practice' and its inclusion into youth work training / induction.
5. The C.D.U. should continue to develop partnership working with a range of organizations and professions beyond the youth sector.
6. The C.D.U. should develop mechanisms for participation of young people in the work of C.D.U



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