

*EDUCATION
FOR ALL
YAP
YOUTH
CEO GROUP
2022*



**HOPES FOR THE FUTURE – EVERYONE CAN
RECEIVE THE EDUCATION THAT THEY NEED IN A
SYSTEM THAT IS DESIGNED IN A FLEXIBLE WAY.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

02	ABOUT US
03	OUR GROUP
04	KEY MESSAGES
05	ÁINE O'KEEFE INTERVIEW
07	NIALL MULDOON INTERVIEW
08	RACHEL INTERVIEW
09	KEY LEARNINGS
10	OUR RECOMMENDATIONS



ABOUT US

WHO ARE THE YOUTH CEO GROUP?

The Youth CEO Group come from across the country and work with the CEO on a specific project to make a difference in society.

We chose Equality in Education this year in line with the overall YAP Ireland theme of Equality for Everyone.

We had the idea of doing a podcast featuring different views on Education and how change for the better could be achieved.

We interviewed a range of people involved in Education and this booklet tells you about the main things that we suggest should happen to make Education really Equal for Everyone.

We learned a lot about good communication, interview skills, working together, focusing on a project, had a lot of fun and good food!!!!



OUR GROUP

EDWARD:

I'm 17 and from Limerick. I'm in alternative education. I prefer alternative education because there is less stress, and I can learn more. I prefer the more practical work because I do Health and Safety in the workplace and self advocacy and work experience. I did not like traditional education because I have learning difficulties and my experience was very stressful and I did not like the bullying. I would like to be a twitch streamer and I go to TUS Limerick.

FELIX:

I'm 13 and live in Limerick. I am going into second year in a co-ed uniformed school. I don't necessarily enjoy my school although I manage. I wish the school day was shorter since I get extremely anxious in class as well as by the end of the day, I am too tired to enjoy my free time. I hope that schools can continue to become more welcoming, strengths based and bring more focus on the students. In my future I see myself doing college courses in psychology and Architecture.

KATIE:

My name is Katie. I live in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary. My experience in education in general has been pretty good. For me, it really depended on how the teacher taught something. For example, I would learn better by taking down notes rather than listening. In the future, I hope to have a successful career in Zoology, own a nice house and car, and have a family.

ALIX:

I'm Alix, I'm 16 and I'm from Cork. I'm currently not in education but my past experiences in mainstream school have not been very positive. I'm hoping to go back to an alternative education setting in the future and I hope this will be better suited for me. My hopes for the future are to get a full education and go to college to study medicine.

Cian:

I'm 17 and live in Dublin. My experience with education is good and bad. Within education I think there is more to help kids who are struggling. I'm currently in Youth Reach and I will get a good education here because you learn life skills and shows you how to cope after school.

Alice:

I'm 13. I live in Dublin. My education so far in mainstream school has been not great and has put me off attending school. I would love for schools to be more understanding of people's situations and offer more support instead of judgement.

KEY MESSAGES

YOU DON'T
NEED A
LEAVING CERT
TO ACHIEVE
YOUR GOALS.

THERE ARE PEOPLE
WHO ARE THERE TO
HELP YOU TO
ACHIEVE YOUR
GOALS, RESOURCES,
SUPPORT.

IF YOU DON'T
SPEAK UP ABOUT
YOUR PROBLEMS
YOU WON'T BE ABLE
TO FIND
SOLUTIONS.

MAINSTREAM
SCHOOLS SHOULD
ACCOMMODATE
DIFFERENT FORMS
OF LEARNING.

EVERY CHILD HAS A
RIGHT TO AN
EDUCATION - THIS
IS A RIGHT AND
MUST BE UPHELD

ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION OPTIONS
SHOULD BE AVAILABLE,
RESPECTED, PROPERLY
RESOURCED

NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE
KNOW ABOUT THE
OMBUDSMAN FOR
CHILDREN OFFICE.

INTERVIEW WITH AINE O'KEEFE: NATIONAL MANAGER OF TUSLA EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE

Tusla Education Support Service operates under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, a piece of legislation that emphasises the promotion of school attendance, participation and retention. TESS has three strands namely the Statutory Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and the two school support services the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme (SCP). The three TESS strands work together collaboratively with schools, families and other relevant services to achieve the best educational outcomes for children and young people.

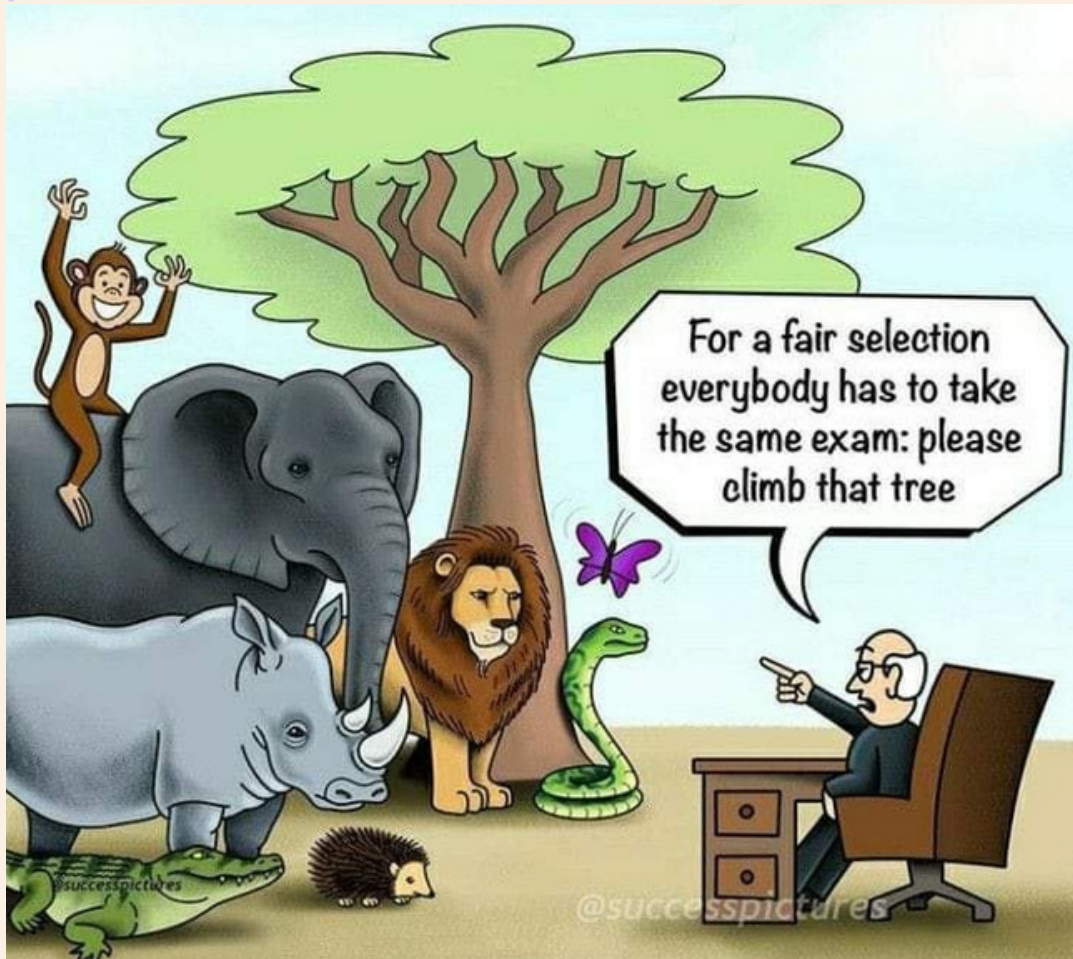
YOUNG PEOPLE
HAVE A LEGAL
RIGHT TO
EDUCATION AND
TO LEARN

What we learned about the service:

- Responsible for School Completion Programmes for DEIS schools with additional funding that enables young people to participate fully in school
- Educational welfare services nationally – support for young person not attending school or defend their right to attend school
- There can be many reasons why young people don't go to school – usually building over a number of years, transition from primary to secondary may be more difficult for some young people than others.
- Family circumstances, community resources and individual factors – poverty, mental health, bullying.
- Because everyone learns differently, they want to have more pathways for young people to education – Schools should facilitate different learning methods and there should be more alternatives to education

THERE MAY BE FEAR
FROM YOUNG PEOPLE
AND FAMILIES
AROUND THIS SERVICE
BUT THE EWO'S COME
FROM A WELFARE AND
SUPPORT WAY OF
WORKING

“EVERYBODY IS A GENIUS. BUT IF YOU JUDGE A FISH BY IT’S ABILITY TO CLIMB A TREE IT WILL LIVE IT’S WHOLE LIFE BELIEVING IT IS STUPID.” - ALBERT EINSTEIN



The hope would be that the new department of higher education would have a better focus on a diverse range of pathways and options rather just than the traditional academic route (we all think & learn differently so we need to have different options and avenues.

What is most important for young people and families to know?

- The EWO helps young people to go back to school
- If a young person is expelled the EWO will do their best to get them a new school or check if the school was in the right to expel the student

TESS helps children and families both primary and secondary level. Young people who aren't in school feel bad – society in Ireland is very fixated on going to college. Alternative education is seen as not as good, other options are not valued as much – this is wrong.

INTERVIEW WITH NIALL MULDOON: OMBUDSMAN FOR CHILDREN

What do they do?

- We are a human rights institution and work to protect the rights of children and young people in Ireland.
- We investigate complaints about services provided to children by public organisations.
- We want children and young people to be actively heard and respected so they experience safe, fulfilling and happy everyday lives.

THE NAME MEANS
DEFENDER OF CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS -

"WE ARE HERE TO HELP,
WE WILL UPHOLD YOUR
RIGHTS"



What we learned about the service:

- Young people were involved in the hiring of the Ombudsman
- There are multiple ways to access the service – website, letters, phone calls and on line platforms
- Young people and parents/carers can call even if they don't know if the OCO is the right service - can give advice about other services and will keep note of the issues that are coming up
- Information is Power - Use their influence to raise issues that come through with the Government
- Promoting Children's Rights through workshops in the office, education campaigns and social media
- Independent and Impartial service that answers to the President and not the Government

Why it's important to have OCO - Achievements:

- Campaigned for the creation of a Minister for Children and now have longest serving Minister
- Campaign to end the imprisonment of young people aged 16 and 17 in St. Patrick's Institution and are now held in Oberstown Children's Detention Centre

Fun welcoming
office space
and the Voice
of Young
People is their
top priority

INTERVIEW WITH RACHEL LUCEY, MANAGER OF THE LIFE CENTRE IN CORK.

What do they do?

Cork life Centre is a voluntary organisation offering an alternative learning environment to marginalised young people.



The Centre and its staff offer students 1:1 tuition in Junior and Leaving Cert subjects and support them in their preparation for these State Exams. The approach to education is a holistic one. The value is in the social education of young people as much as on the academic.

With The Centre, many young 12-18-year-old early school leavers have achieved formal school certification. The success of the project is the mix of nurturance, individual programs, educational certification, stimulation, fun, hard work, mutual respect, and expectations.

The Centre provides students and teachers with:

- An open and friendly environment.
- Positive trusting relationships with peers and staff.
- Continuous support with issues and challenges a student might face during work

KEY LEARNINGS

- Everyone should feel equal and calm. No uniforms, no hierarchy of classes, teachers use first names, start time later, more flexible with timetable,
- Study subjects that young people like. - Try to offer a very broad subject base - Volunteer led – find tutors who will volunteer to teach various subjects.

SUPPORT

- **Wraparound service.** – Develop and use more programmes that address social issues – racism, traveller culture, homophobia. Help with housing, counselling, link families with services. Services based on respectful intervention – if the young person wants it. Focus on trust building to develop acceptance of different types of support.
- **Try to find out why young people are behaving the way they are.** Work to agree on ways forward in a welcoming adaptable and flexible environment, while still having clear rules and boundaries.
- **Don't call in parents to give out about young people's behaviour etc.,** – give the young people agency - their responsibility.
- **Respect parents/carers and families** and what they have been through with the education system.
- **Staff are learners.** Teachers learn a lot from the young people's experiences and resilience.
- **Encourage young people to speak about their experience,** Young People should be encouraged to advocate for themselves and use their voices. Not only in education but all the services that impact on them – health, family support, addiction, housing etc

EQUALITY



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Curriculum more inclusive - more flexibility in mainstream schools.
- What would young people like to learn about - What we want our education to be about.
- More Time for teachers to address all issues that are there for young people – they don't have time to support as all focused on academic achievement.
- Transition to secondary school is very difficult – huge expectations without the support for teachers or young people.
- Mental health professionals in schools.
- Young people feel very stigmatised for being out of school and feel they have failed.
- The system has failed not the young people.
- Reduce the stigma by addressing lack of flexibility in schools and support out of school options where needed.

FLEXIBLE



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– EVERYONE CAN RECEIVE THE
EDUCATION THAT THEY NEED IN A
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FLEXIBLE WAY.**

Youth Advocate
PROGRAMMES IRELAND
Celebrating 20 years in Ireland!



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Registered Charity Number: 2007146
Charities Regulator Number: 468697
CRO Number: C4Y18652