

# UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

EDINBURGH YOUTH WORK CONSORTIUM  
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH



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There were no conflicts of interest in the writing of this report.

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# FOREWORD

This original piece of joint research by the University of Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium is both timely and challenging.

Its focus on universal youth work comes at a time of genuine concern about the future of youth work in Scotland. It is timely because the new National Youth Work Strategy 2014 - 19 focuses the attention of young people, practitioners, and policy makers on the importance of youth work to our life as a nation and as local communities. The strategy explicitly includes the ambition to 'explore the potential for commissioning research to demonstrate the role and value of youth work'. Timely - because Community Learning & Development is under the spotlight, with local authority CLD strategies being developed, even as local CLD services face severe cutbacks. Timely - because the recent referendum has generated an unprecedented engagement amongst young people with the political process and the reality of democratic participation. Youth work has always dreamt of this.

At the same time, this research makes slightly uneasy reading as it presents a number of challenges to us. How do we continue to celebrate the best of youth work practice in an environment where public services are subject to radical surgery? How can we draw on real evidence about the way we work, rather than what we would like to hear? How can we invest time, energy, and resources to help us better understand the long term impact of youth work? Where does universal youth work sit within the National Youth Work Strategy?

Thanks are due to many people and organisations: to the Robertson Trust, YouthLink Scotland, and Youth Scotland for funding; to the University of Edinburgh for hosting and managing the research; to the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium for initiating and guiding the work (especially Dona Milne and the Research Steering Group); to NHS Lothian and NHS Health Scotland for providing in-kind support; and to Callum McGregor for undertaking the research.

This research is a small (but beautifully shaped) pebble in a large pool. We believe that the ripples will be felt by many, and there's a chance that they create a wave that will shape the way young people experience and benefit from youth work in the years to come.

**Simon Jaquet**  
**Chair**  
**Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium**

**April 2015**

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 CONTEXT

The University of Edinburgh's (UoE) Institute for Education, Community and Society was commissioned to undertake this review in collaboration with the Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium (EYWC). The EYWC acts as a major forum for youth work agencies from across the city and undertakes a range of work that supports and promotes universal youth work. EYWC was also the author of the report *Believing in Young People*, which was adopted by the City of Edinburgh Council as the youth work strategy for the city. EYWC involves a range of youth work agencies, is independently chaired and run entirely on goodwill.

The research rationale, purpose and questions were initially developed by a steering group consisting of members of the EYWC, the research team from the UoE and the project's funders. The steering group represents a broad group of professional perspectives all united by a belief in the value of universal youth work. The Robertson Trust, YouthLink Scotland and Youth Scotland are the funders for this project. In addition, the review would not have been possible without the help of youth work professionals across Scotland and the UK, with whom we corresponded in order to obtain grey literature for this review.

As a political and policy ideal, 'universal youth work' places youth work in the context of arguments for universal welfare provision. In such terms all young people have the right to authentic opportunities for personal and social development. This requires the provision of spaces fostering sustained engagement on young peoples' own terms. If youth work is solely targeted at so-called risky, troubled or at-risk young people, it becomes vulnerable itself, because it creates distinctions between those young people with access to resources and those in need of 'intervention'. Just as in health care, child care and education more generally, 'a service for the poor inevitably becomes a poor service' as those with the resources and social capital to advocate for youth work as a public good 'abandon the system' (McKee and Stuckler, 2011, p. 30).

## 1.2 RATIONALE

These are both exciting and challenging times for youth work in Scotland. The publication of the National Youth Work Strategy sets out shared ambitions through to 2019. Recent research has also highlighted the importance of youth work, both internationally and in Europe.

Such research has also revealed that organisations providing universal youth work often struggle to get funding and to be recognised as contributors to positive outcomes for young people. This is due, in part, to the recent economic crisis and its consequences in policy but it is compounded by three factors: (1) a lack of conceptual clarity around youth work practice; (2) a lack of robust outcome measures that can be used to demonstrate the impact of youth work; (3) the inherent difficulty of measuring subtle and so-called 'soft' outcomes, as compared to targeted work with a clearly defined purpose and more clearly definable outcomes.

The past decade has been a challenging time for youth work in Scotland. Nevertheless, it has continued to thrive and make a difference in local communities. In this current climate, it has never been more important to be able to share and demonstrate the positive impacts that youth work has on the lives and lifestyles of young people.

Prevention and early intervention are key tenets of current policy in Scotland. Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), a national policy which underpins this strategy and the new Children and Young People (Scotland) Act which incorporates the rights of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), has helped evidence that to improve the life chances and well-being of all children and young people in Scotland, we must focus on keeping children *Safe*;

*Healthy; Achieving; Nurtured; Active; Respected; Responsible and Included (also known as the SHANARRI well-being indicators)*. This is further reinforced in the draft National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019 'Our ambitions for improving the life chances of young people in Scotland' (2013) with a clear recognition of the contribution youth work makes towards the National Outcomes for Scotland.

It is widely recognised that universal services such as education and health services have a key part to play in supporting children and young people to grow up to become effective contributors to society. It is generally accepted that youth work also has a key role to play in this area, however, much of the literature relating to the impact of youth work has focused on specific issues such as its contribution to increasing participation of young people in society and the effectiveness of particular programmes.

There is significant interest in, and emphasis on, ways of preventing negative long term outcomes for children and young people, such as offending, unemployment and poor health. Much of the literature examining interventions that are effective in preventing these poor outcomes comes from other parts of the world such as the United States and often cites the effectiveness of *youth development programmes* as effective prevention activities. The components of these programmes often share particular features of what we call 'youth work' in Britain, without referring to it as such. The focus of this review is not however on issues such as social deprivation, inequality, crime, drug and alcohol use.

In recognition of this, The Edinburgh Youth Work Consortium, in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, YouthLink Scotland, Youth Scotland, NHS Scotland and The Robertson Trust have collaborated to develop a document that will do three things:

- Illuminate the distinct purpose of universal youth work;
- Demonstrate the rich array of methods and approaches to youth work and its evaluation;
- Reveal the diverse outcomes of universal youth work practice.

The document places evidence of the impacts and outcomes of universal youth work in wider conversation with theoretical ideas and conceptual debates that have shaped the field of youth work in Scotland and beyond over the last decade. It therefore acts as both a rapid evidence review for subsequent developments on this topic and a valuable standalone resource for youth work professionals wishing to engage with contemporary developments in the field.

### **1.3 PURPOSE**

The purpose of the literature review is to critically examine the variety of influences shaping contemporary youth work and to identify how practice benefits the development of young people in society. It offers examples of contemporary youth work practice, with particular emphasis on the purposes and outcomes of universal youth work, undertaken for its benefits to the personal development of all young people who choose to participate. A broad definition of youth work will be employed, to subsume provision with a focus on particular kinds of content such as sporting or cultural activity, alongside more broadly-based youth work programmes. The YouthLink Scotland statement on the nature and purpose of youth work (2005) outlines the purpose of youth work in terms of the following three essential features:

- *Young people choose to participate;*
- *The work must build from where young people are;*
- *Youth work recognises the young person and the worker as partners in a learning process.*

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This report aims to address the following research questions.

1. What theories and concepts shape contemporary youth work?
2. What outcomes arise from what we understand as 'universal' youth work provision?
3. Can we demonstrate the link between universal youth work and the 'national outcomes'?

Where possible (in light of its complexity) the steering group was also keen to address the following research question:

4. Are there particular associations between types of provision and economic, demographic or social factors? If so what are they?

## 1.5 UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK IN THE CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT

### 1.5.1 THE EUROPEAN UNION

Although youth work in Scotland and the UK operates within distinctive national policy environments, many of the policy trends shaping youth work are observable at the European level. Three prominent trends are: the shift towards issue-specific targeted interventions aimed at 'at-risk' or 'socially excluded' groups; a focus on employability; and evidence-based youth work.

Recent studies of youth work policy and practice across 27 EU member states suggests that the economic crisis of 2008 and the implementation of austerity measures put pressure on funders to evidence a return on investment. Consequently, the individual country reports 'connect the shift towards evidence-based youth work as being primarily fuelled by funding requirements' (Dunne et al. 2014, p.76). Over the past five to ten years the evidence suggests that the shift towards evidence-based youth work has been particularly pronounced not only in the UK but also in Germany, Ireland and Finland (p. 76).

Similarly, based on a comparative review of member states 'there is ample evidence of a shift in priorities as a result of the economic crisis' towards addressing the 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET) crisis. UK youth work is not alone in this regard; the shift towards employability is particularly pronounced in Bulgaria, Spain, Lithuania and Poland (Dunne et al. 2014, p. 74). Linked to this trend is the shift towards targeted intervention, particularly in England and Northern Ireland (p. 75). As a consequence, at a European level, all of this 'creates challenges for youth work initiatives that seek to engage with all young people and provide them with meaningful activities' (p. 76).

This being said, Dunne et al (2014, p. 71) also report a European trend in the *rhetoric* of youth policy away from deficit framings of young people towards viewing them as societal 'assets' to be 'empowered'. While practitioners will be aware of this pronounced policy language shift in Scotland, it is notably also found in Austria, Germany and France (p.71). Whilst in principle this policy language fits within the tradition of a progressive universalist approach, 'pragmatism dictates' that this language remains directed at 'young people who lack access to the critical developmental inputs' (Schulman & Davies 2007, p.4)

In terms of formalised definitions of youth work at the European level, the 2010 Resolution of the Council of the EU on youth work states that:

*Youth work takes place in the extracurricular area, as well as through specific leisure time activities, and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation. These activities and processes are self-managed, co-managed or managed under educational or pedagogical guidance by either professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and can develop and be subject to changes caused by different dynamics (in Dunne et al. 2014, p.53).*



Dunne et al make the important distinction between youth policy and youth work policy (p. 97). In terms of youth policy, the *EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018)* has two main priorities (European Council, 2012):

- *To provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market*
- *To encourage young people to be active citizens and participate in society*

This is further divided into the following eight priority areas (European Council, 2012, pp. 11-14):

1. Education and training.
2. Employment and entrepreneurship.
3. Health and wellbeing.
4. Social inclusion.
5. Participation.
6. Voluntary activities.
7. Culture and creativity.
8. Youth and the world.

The 2012 *EU Youth Report* found that the strategy significantly influenced the youth policy of member states with regards to the eight priority areas. However (to the extent that this is seen by youth work professionals in member states as a desirable situation) stakeholders from member states reported a number of barriers to implementation. Tellingly, one of the main barriers cited was 'highlighting the added value of non-formal education and youth work for other policy areas' (European Commission, 2012, p. 36).

Across the EU, the existence of *youth work* policies is less common. Dunne et al (2014, p.97) found that 'comparison of the country reports show that it is rarely the case that EU countries have a dedicated strategy that is specifically for youth work. However, aspects of youth work are often incorporated into national youth strategies or action plans'. In fact, in the EU Scotland joins Northern Ireland, Wales, Finland and Estonia as the only member states with dedicated strategies. Spain and Portugal have strategies under development (p. 98).

## 1.5.2 REST OF THE UK (NOT INCLUDING SCOTLAND)

### ENGLAND

Youth work in Scotland, Wales and Ireland is shaped by youth policy relating specifically to those territories. During the period 1997-2010 the New Labour policy emphases on issues such as social inclusion, antisocial behaviour policy and community cohesion resulted in increasing resources being directed at a variety of forms of youth work and related activity. It is reported that by 2008 there were just over 3000 professionally qualified youth workers in England (Bradford & Cullen 2014, p.93). Under New Labour, the policy documents *Transforming Youth Work* (DES, 2002) and *Youth Matters* (HMG, 2005) were largely representative of a turn towards an instrumental target and outcomes-driven approach to youth work, focused on youth work as a vehicle to address the perception of a crisis in relation to young people 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET). Youth work was also seen as one way of delivering on the 'community cohesion' agenda. Whilst ostensibly there was a commitment to 'universal services' working closely with 'targeted

and specialist' services (HMG, 2005, p. 10), this policy landscape represented a significant challenge for universal youth work, as summed up in this overtly critical account (Turner 2005, pp.50–53):

*Traditional club and street based forms of provision, by contrast, where 'curriculum' is often implicit, membership voluntary and open-ended, and 'programmes' largely developed over time through messy negotiation, do not readily comport with prevailing beliefs amongst policy makers ...[based on] an obsession with consistency, risk-aversion and control.*

The difficulty of squaring universal youth work with the targets and outcomes agenda was indeed recognised by the National Youth Agency's (NYA) document entitled *The future for outcomes: the calculator in practice* (NYA n.d., p.10):

*The impact of open access work remains practically hard to measure for a number of reasons: Young people may engage for highly variable lengths of time and intensity...It is necessary to consider whether it is desirable to use detailed outcome measures in open access settings.*

Such accountability pressures inevitably increased in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis as public funding was cut across the UK. Under the Coalition Government, youth policy was set out in the document *Positive for Youth* (PfY) (HMG 2011). Generally speaking, this document's commitment to voluntarism has been interpreted as a threat to professional youth work which reflects the Government's wider commitment to shrinking state expenditure with the goal of deficit reduction (Bradford & Cullen 2014). Commentators have argued that PfY replaces the distinctive language and practice of youth work with the language and practice of therapeutic social work and peer mentoring (Bradford & Cullen 2014, pp.102–103). Nevertheless, advocacy organisations such as the NYA continue in their recent *Vision of youth work to 2020* to maintain a commitment to universal youth work alongside more targeted forms of provision (NYA 2014, p.3).

## WALES

In Wales, the Learning and Skills Act 2000 legislate for statutory youth services. Very recently, the Welsh youth work strategy that existed since 2007 has been replaced by the *National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014-2018* (Welsh Government 2014). This document explicitly aligns Welsh policy priorities with EU youth policy priorities of equal opportunities for all young people in education and the labour market (Welsh Government 2014, p. 5). The document is forthcoming in its support for universal services, stating that:

*Open-access provision offers a safe environment where young people can engage with youth workers whom are able to help and support them in their transition toward adulthood. We know that open-access services are highly valued by many young people for the continuity of support they offer within communities.*

The document also states that a priority is to strengthen the links between universal and targeted youth work and between youth work and formal education. The Youth Service Revenue grant will be used to 'support open-access provision' (Welsh Government 2014, p. 19). The new strategy is also clear about the need to 'significantly strengthen the evidence base on the impact of youth work across Wales'. Outcomes therefore feature heavily and are clustered under three groups: *active participation, skills development and emotional competence* (p. 7-8). Furthermore, a National Outcomes Agreement is being developed at the time of writing, with outcomes framed in terms of the development of 'life-skills and resilience' (p. 14). The contribution of youth work to enhanced educational achievement is a central outcome focus. The value of open access youth work in this document appears to be expressed primarily in this document in terms of its *bridging* function: that is providing a bridge to *formal education* and to *targeted services* for at-risk youth (p. 9).

## NORTHERN IRELAND

The impending *Education Bill* will provide the legislative foundation for youth services. At the time of writing, the '*Delivery of Youth Work Strategy 2005-2008* is being replaced by a major new policy for youth services called *Priorities for Youth*' (Dunne et al. 2014, p.208). The existing strategy does state that the promotion of 'open and equal access to youth service activities for all young people' is a policy priority (Department of Education NI 2005, p. 19). The document also states as a priority the development and implementation of

'a young-person centred research strategy which will inform the development of evidence-based youth work' (p. 6). This entailed the development of 'performance/outcome indicators for youth work which reflect the values, aims and priorities of the Youth Work Strategy' (p. 7).

As in other policy contexts, the tension between universal youth work as an open-ended social pedagogical process and the need to develop outcomes seems stark. Commentator Morgan (2009, p.59) is youth work being ideologically shaped by external policies in the pursuit of learning outcomes? Adapted from the source document.

The Investor Approach: A way forward for the Community Fund? (Introduction suggested in 2009 that for this reason 'little progress appears to have been made on defining outcomes'. Morgan (p. 62) also suggested that a weakness of the outcomes agenda in Northern Ireland is that it is being developed for young people rather than by them or with them. Lastly, Morgan suggested that the ongoing debate over outcomes is creating noise that obfuscates the primary value of youth work, which is the development of authentic relationships with young people at crucial times in their lives (p. 62). This is all to demonstrate the key dilemmas that are occurring across various policy contexts.

### 1.5.3 IRELAND

In Scotland's closest EU neighbour Ireland, the Youth Work Act 2001 legislated for youth work but the Youth Policy Framework is currently replacing it. In subsequent years the *Irish National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007* (Department of Education and Science 2003) was published, the National Quality Standards for Youth Work were established in 2010 and a Department of Children and Youth Affairs was established in 2011 (Dickson et al. 2013, p.8; Dunne et al. 2014, p.203). During this decade, a move towards outcomes-led and evidence-based youth work has been one of the main developments, alongside professionalisation and increased unity in the sector (Jenkinson 2013, p.4).

Interestingly, with respect to the nature and purpose of youth work, the *Development Plan* explicitly juxtaposes non-formal education with learning arguing that the principal aim of youth work is non-formal education as opposed to merely learning, which can be incidental (Department of Education and Science 2003, p. 13). However, the document is clear that 'curriculum' emerges from processes of experiential learning that is collectively negotiated, premised on the development of 'mutually trustful and respectful relationships' and the principle of voluntary engagement. In this sense, the policy context seems compatible with the principles of universal youth work. This being said, the dynamics in Ireland are much the same as everywhere else, with resources squeezed as a result of the financial crisis and a corresponding move towards targeted and remedial interventions, which has led to concern in the sector about 'the provision of universal youth work initiatives aimed at the general youth population' and an overall 'erosion' of 'universalism' as a 'foundational tenet' of youth work (Jenkinson 2013, p.10).

As a result, the outcomes agenda goes hand-in-hand with the increasing need to demonstrate value for money and is a particular challenge for universal, as opposed to targeted, youth work in Ireland, as in the previous policy contexts discussed. Research has revealed that some youth work professionals in Ireland are ambivalent about the outcomes agenda (Jenkinson 2013, p.13):

*At a broad level, those interviewed welcomed the opportunity for youth work to be more focused around being able to demonstrate and account for the value of the work, with the aim of improving outcomes for young people. However, a desire was also expressed that it was important that this be a genuine and collaborative exercise, which is owned by youth organisations rather than a bureaucratic task.*

As elsewhere, youth workers experiencing this policy context have expressed concerns around the tension between the core aim of developing authentic relationships and measurable outcomes (p. 13). The Department for Children and Youth Affairs, in recognition of the need to provide an evidence base for youth work, commissioned a systematic review of the youth work literature (Dickson et al. 2013).

#### 1.5.4 SCOTLAND

The sections above reveal shared regional and national youth work policy patterns with regard to universal youth work and the outcomes agenda. In Scotland, advocates for universal youth work can clearly learn much from the experience of their European, UK and Irish colleagues. A new *National Youth Work Strategy 2014-2019* (Scottish Government 2014) recently replaced the strategy in place since 2007. There is promise of dedicated spending but the economic climate has led to decreased funding as in other EU member state policy contexts (Dunne et al. 2014, p.208). Although the Scottish Government has devolved responsibility for education policy, Scotland is not immune from the public sector impacts of Westminster austerity policies. The depth of these cuts across the UK in relation to statutory youth work and the youth sector more broadly, are revealed through trade union Unison's research based on Freedom of Information requests. Unison estimates that youth services lost £60 million of funding between 2012 and 2014 (Unison 2014).

The previous strategy *Moving Forward* (Scottish Government 2007) was primarily based around a commitment to universal access to personal and social development through youth work and developing the capacity of the sector to deliver and measure positive outcomes. The new strategy is equally explicit in its commitment to universal youth work and evidencing positive outcomes (Scottish Government 2014, p. 3):

*[The strategy] recognises the contribution that youth work makes towards the National Outcomes and the wide range of activities and policies that impact on young people's lives; it also recognises that both universal and more targeted specific work have equal validity and importance.*

It is the combination of these twin commitments, and the recognition of the tension between them, that lends such salience to the particular focus of this literature review. With this, the next chapter moves on to give an account of the review's methods.

# CHAPTER 2 REVIEW METHODS

## 2.1 WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE REVIEW?

The research process was shaped through ongoing discussions within the steering group. The discussions focused on the following:

- Refining the scope of the work and the research questions
- Refining the search strategy
- Refining the inclusion/exclusion criteria for literature and ensuring that there was a shared understanding regarding the application of the criteria
- Presenting the findings and discussing the implications of the findings.

## 2.2 HOW DID WE FIND THE LITERATURE?

Firstly, during the period of interest in this research (2004-2014) various reviews with potential relevance to our research questions have been produced. In particular, since 2013 two particularly comprehensive reviews have been produced. One mapped the international literature on youth work and included a section on youth work outcomes (Dickson et al. 2013). The other reviewed the literature on youth work in Europe and considered the evidence base around a variety of outcomes (Dunne et al. 2014).

So as not to replicate valuable work and work within our given capacity the steering group decided on the following approach. Our first step was to take both these reviews into account and determine the extent to which information in them could be synthesised to answer our research questions. After this, we decided to examine all relevant literature from 2011 onwards. This cut off point was chosen because it was the earliest point from which we could be sure that the two reviews may have failed to pick up relevant literature. The review on the *Value of youth work in Europe* (Dunne et al., 2014) did not disclose its cut-off date for literature searching. However, the *Systematic mapping* of the international literature (Dickson et al. 2013, p. 43) recognised that for subsequent work, 'additional searching would also be needed to identify studies that have been published since the original searches were undertaken in late 2011 and extra effort should be made to locate full reports that could not be found in the time available for this map. This would include, in particular, the grey literature and websites. This search generated only a few relevant results, and so it we decided to use the same search strategy to conduct a similar literature search from 2004 to 2010. However, again to avoid duplication, we agreed to remove any literature from our search that featured in the two recent reviews (Dickson et al. 2013; Dunne et al. 2014). The team recognised that what this report would add is the inclusion of literature not included in the two systematic reviews and an additional focus on the grey literature. Therefore, the search strategy was devised to maximise the chances of finding both academic and grey literature. In this report we use grey literature to refer to any literature, which is not an academic journal article. This includes practice-based reports, commentaries and evaluations as well as academic books and research theses. In the initial stages, the primary researcher consulted the UoE's expert librarian for the subject area of education. The expert librarian helped the primary researcher to maximise the UoE's resources, identify relevant search domains and construct strings of search terms.

### 2.2.1 SEARCH STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC JOURNALS

The databases listed in table 1 (appendix 2) were searched to find academic journal articles. The search strategy took into account the strategies of other reviews. The two primary considerations for conducting searches are 'sensitivity' and 'specificity' (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006, p. 83). Sensitive searches will recover a high proportion of the total volume of relevant studies. On the other hand, specific searches recover a low proportion of irrelevant results but in doing so may miss potentially relevant studies.

An example of a *specific* search was the systematic review on the *Impact of youth work for young people* (Fouche et al. 2010). The researchers only considered studies literally referring to 'youth work'. The consequence (but not only for this reason) was an empty review. At the other end of the spectrum, Dickson et al's (2013) international review took a *sensitive* approach and used a variety of synonyms and related terms in various combinations. As a result, they identified thousands of papers, only a very small fraction of which were actually included in the final review. This study experimented with a sensitive approach at first. The lead researcher took into account existing approaches and used the thesaurus of various databases to search for synonyms. The expert librarian was consulted at this stage. However, the volume of results returned from databases was far too high to process given the limited time and resources. The final decision was to use a very specific search strategy, searching various databases for 'youth work \*' in the fields of title, abstract and keywords.

### 2.2.2 SEARCH STRATEGY FOR GREY LITERATURE BOOKS, THESES AND CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS

For online only titles, *Springer*, *Oxford Scholarship Online* and *Policy Press* were searched. In addition, the team had access to the extensive personal library of a Senior Community Education lecturer specialising in youth work. A variety of different digital repositories were identified for digital theses in different geographical regions and countries. UK-based theses were retrieved digitally using the *Ethos* service (<http://ethos.bl.uk/>) or by making requests for interlibrary loans.

### PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS

Contact was made with youth work providers in Scotland and the UK between July and September 2014 in order to identify grey literature and unpublished reports and evaluations. A short text which explained the project and requested literature was developed by the steering group and published in newsletters for Community Learning and Development managers in Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, and Youth Scotland.. Further more detailed information was posted on the LAYC website at the same time.. In addition, the researcher sent a number of emails directly to key contacts in order to request specific material that could not be obtained from websites.

### YOUTH WORK-RELATED WEBSITES

Appendix 2 lists youth work-related websites and blogs that were hand searched for relevant materials by the primary researcher between July and mid-September. The software *NCapture* was used to gather web-based materials as web-page captures that were imported into *NVivo* for analysis. Important sites were first identified and then other sites were found through 'snowballing' by following hyperlinks.

### OTHER DATABASES FOR GREY LITERATURE FROM PUBLIC AND THIRD SECTORS

Lastly, a number of databases/search portals specialising in grey literature were searched. These are listed in appendix 2.

## 2.3 HOW DID WE DECIDE WHAT TO INCLUDE AND EXCLUDE?

The following criteria were used to include or exclude identified studies or relevant material:

- Language (only studies published in English were considered in this study) were considered
- Year (only studies published between 2004 and 2014 were considered)
- Population and geographical coverage (see section 2.3.1)
- Type of study or other relevant material (see section 2.3.2)
- Intervention characteristics (see section 2.3.3)

### 2.3.1 POPULATION AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Upon considering what research might be applicable to a Scottish and UK context, the steering group decided that we would consider literature focused on youth work in Europe and from High Income countries as defined by the World Bank's criteria<sup>1</sup>. This was based on the decision to be consistent with the other two recent large-scale reviews (Dickson et al. 2013; Dunne et al. 2014). Studies and evaluation of young people outside the age range 11-25 were excluded. However, if the age-range was not clear but the text seemed relevant it was considered for inclusion.

### 2.3.2 TYPE OF STUDY OR OTHER RELEVANT MATERIAL

We considered any text which addressed the following research questions:

- What theories and concepts have shaped youth work from 2004-present?
- What outcomes arise from what we understand as 'universal' youth work provision (2004-present)?

This means that the criteria for inclusion were broad and involved the careful exercise of judgement and interpretation by the steering group. In order to gain a critical perspective on universal youth work it is necessary to place it in conversation with important theories and concepts in the wider literature. Thus, in addition to identifying formal theory, the project was concerned to address and identify the concepts that have been driving debates and critical discussion in the field of youth work.

It was considered that this report would be more valuable as an educational resource if it related universal youth work not only to its outcomes but to other crucial theoretical/conceptual strands driving practice.

Thus, we included:

1. Studies or relevant texts detailing empirical research/evaluation in relation to the outcomes of universal youth work.
2. Studies or relevant texts engaging in theoretical and conceptual discussion in relation to youth work, broadly speaking.

### 2.3.3 INTERVENTION CHARACTERISTICS

For empirical studies addressing the outcomes of universal youth work, YouthLink Scotland's three distinctive features were used as criteria for inclusion/exclusion. This means that for empirical evaluations of outcomes non-voluntary interventions and interventions targeted expressly at particular at-risk target groups were excluded. Secondly, pre-defined issue based interventions were excluded.

1 <http://data.worldbank.org/about/country-and-lending-groups>

### 2.3.4 DATA MANAGEMENT

All texts (academic and grey literature) were managed using the reference management software *Mendeley* because of its social networking capabilities. Retrieved texts and study reference details were uploaded to a Mendeley file and this file was synced to an online account to which various members of the steering group had access. This meant that different members of the steering group could access the Mendeley library remotely, which was managed by the primary researcher. Web page captures were uploaded straight into qualitative data analysis software *NVivo*.

### 2.3.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The steering group recognised that since the inclusion/exclusion criteria required interpretive judgement, an effective quality assurance process was needed to ensure that the primary researcher's interpretation, and that offered by other steering group members was broadly consistent. For this purpose it was decided that once the primary researcher had determined the total number of studies and relevant texts for analysis at the first sweep, a 10% random sample would be independently assessed for inclusion or exclusion by members of the steering group, the results of which would then be matched against the judgement of the primary researcher.

## GREY LITERATURE

Grey literature and academic literature was treated separately. The total count for the first sweep of grey literature was 300 items (an item could be a web page capture, a thesis, a report and so on). The items were assigned individual numbers. Thereafter, 30 items ( $0.1 \times 300$ ) were then chosen at random by having their number generated by a true random number generator at [www.random.org](http://www.random.org).

Three members of the steering group reviewed the grey literature to decide whether or not to include based on the criteria mentioned in section 2.3. The results of this were then matched for consistency with the results obtained from the primary researcher, having reviewed the same sample. For grey literature, if an abstract or summary was available for an item then the decision was made on that basis. If not, then a decision was made on the basis of a quick sweep of the text. If this was the case, it was likely that the text was short anyway (for example a blog entry).

## ACADEMIC LITERATURE

For the academic literature a total of 711 articles were identified from the initial sweep. Two members of the steering group reviewed the titles and abstracts of a random 5% sample each. In total a random 10% of journal articles (i.e. 70 abstracts) were subjected to the scrutiny. After assigning each article a number, 36 abstracts ( $711 \times 0.05 = 35.6$ ) were randomly selected using [www.random.org](http://www.random.org) and assigned to one member of the steering group. Another set of 34 abstracts ( $(711 - 36) \times 0.05 = 33.8$ ) were randomly assigned to another member of the steering group. The reviewers were given three options for the sample: include, exclude or maybe. Whilst the members of the steering group reviewed these abstracts, the primary researcher reviewed all 711 abstracts and recorded a very brief explanation of the reasons for exclusion or inclusion. Once the two random samples had been reviewed, conversations occurred separately between each reviewer and the primary researcher to discuss any disagreements.

For clear disagreements between a reviewer and primary researcher, the full paper was accessed, and then a decision was made on this basis through further discussion. For instances where the primary researcher was a 'maybe' and the steering group member was either 'include' or 'exclude', or where the steering group member was a 'maybe' and the primary researcher was 'include' or 'exclude' then the primary researcher's judgement took precedence. In such instances, a decision was made on the basis of the full-text.



### 2.3.6 FINAL CORPUS FOR FULL-TEXT ANALYSIS

Once the above process was complete unobtainable texts were removed. In addition to this, grey literature was removed if more formalised versions of the same work could be obtained. For example, if the study forming the basis of a doctoral thesis had been written up into one or more journal articles, then the journal articles were consulted and the thesis discarded. Finally, a total of 365 texts remained to be read on the basis of a full-text analysis, not including webpage captures.

This total comprised both academic journal articles and grey literature. These were imported into qualitative data analysis software NVivo. When texts were imported into NVivo from Mendeley, all the bibliographic details were retained. At the stage of full-text analysis, if a text was irrelevant, it was removed. Through the process of full-text analysis, a final number of 175 texts were consulted for this report. However, due to time constraints, not all potentially relevant literature in relation to theories and concepts was consulted.

## 2.4 HOW DID WE ANALYSE WHAT WE FOUND?

A coding scheme was developed and all texts were analysed, using the qualitative research software NVivo to manage the process. This software supports the analysis of pdf and word documents as well as the various web captures obtained as part of the grey literature search. It allows one to create an analytic coding framework by assigning particular texts and sections of text to 'nodes'. These nodes can either be part of branched hierarchies or can be 'stand-alone' nodes if they are not obviously related to part of a broader hierarchy of concepts. It therefore allows one to systematically thematise, analyse and compare a large volume of text.

Firstly, a master node called 'type of literature' was created. This was then divided into 'theories and concepts' and 'empirical research'. Firstly, the texts were analysed for theories and concepts shaping youth work over the last ten years. Dickson et al's (2013) *Systematic map of the research literature* was consulted and their analytic categories were taken into account, where useful. However, this involved a process of inductive ('ground up') coding, rather than beginning with a number of pre-defined categories. An advantage of NVivo is that nodes can be merged, sub-divided and re-named in a variety of ways as the process evolves.

Empirical studies not to do with outcomes were included if they helped to answer the question about what theories and conceptual debates have shaped practice. These would then be coded under the 'theories and concepts' node. However, in so far as their empirical (as opposed to their theoretical and conceptual) content was concerned, only studies that might give us insight into the outcomes of interventions sharing the characteristics of universal youth work were considered.

Once all the texts had been coded for theories and concepts, the primary researcher moved on to answer the question about youth work outcomes. Again, Dickson et al's (2013, p. 76-77) coding tool was consulted due to its robustness and to aid comparability with previous research. The categories were adapted to suit the purposes of this particular research. A separate node was created for outcomes and these outcomes were coded inductively (from the 'ground up') and were grouped into broader themes, relating, where possible to specific outcomes as defined in Scottish policy, specifically *Curriculum for Excellence, Getting it Right for Every Child* and the purposes of youth work as defined in the new *Scottish strategy (2014-19)* (Scottish Government 2014).

## 2.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This should be regarded as a rapid evidence review and narrative synthesis of the literature on youth work. As such it is impressionistic and claims to systematicity are necessarily qualified. A sensitive search strategy was experimented with. It was clear that searches involving multiple search strings combining different terms and synonyms would not be possible. On this basis, it is

not possible to claim that all potentially relevant literature was identified. In fact, a large volume of potentially relevant literature may remain unidentified.

The response to the call for grey literature from professional contacts was very low. It is likely that some relevant research and evaluations exist that have not been identified. Despite recovering a volume of material by capturing pages from relevant web sites, such webpage captures were not included in the final analysis. Material from published books was not systematically gathered and analysed. Some journal articles and doctoral theses identified through searches were not obtainable or accessible.

Finally, definitional issues remain difficult to overcome in a review such as this. Although samples of literature were discussed by the wider team with a view to reaching a shared understanding about the inclusion/exclusion criteria, the final decision reflects the interpretive bias of the primary researcher. This is probably unavoidable, since universal youth work is on the one hand an 'ideal type' and on the other, part of a spectrum of different kinds of practice. The reality of practice is complex, as are the various ways in which researchers talk about what they study.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this report is presented with the knowledge and confidence that it can resource further dialogue, research and learning for the field of youth work.

# CHAPTER 3

# INSIGHTS FROM EXISTING

# REVIEWS ON YOUTH WORK

## 3.1 DESCRIPTION OF EXISTING REVIEWS OF YOUTH WORK

From this work it became evident that a number of reviews have taken place since 2004. In addition, since 2009, a four volume series on the *History of Youth Work in Europe* has painstakingly reconstructed historical accounts of youth work in many different European countries. This work aimed to compare purposes, practices, policies and politics in order to better understand and inform contemporary youth work practice. The reviews and histories are summarised in appendix 1. This section presents the insights that have been gleaned from them.

## 3.2 WHAT THEORIES AND CONCEPTS HAVE INFLUENCED YOUTH WORK PRACTICE FOR THE LAST DECADE (2004-PRESENT)?

### 3.2.1 WHAT'S IN A NAME? ARGUMENTS FOR A SHARED VOCABULARY

The nature and purpose of youth work is historically contested and subject to a variety of definition. In other words, youth work is driven by a multitude of different theories and concepts. Moreover, the stated nature and purpose of youth work differs according to geographical, social, political and economic context. Given these contextual sensitivities it could be argued that debates over definitions merely confuse things. However, in a comparison of the issues facing youth work in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, Barwick (2006, p. 23) concludes that 'youth work in all three countries needs to better define what it is, and what youth workers do'. It is clear from the above literature that this is a widely shared sentiment and there are several compelling reasons why.

### TAKING OWNERSHIP: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AND SOLIDARITY

It is clearly the case that much youth work practice is not defined as such. Rather, we find a plethora of terms such as 'positive youth development', 'youth services', 'out-of-school', 'outreach', 'youth opportunities', 'positive activities', and so on (Adamson & Poultney 2010; Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012; Dickson et al. 2013). However, employing the language of Paulo Freire, youth work can be used to domesticate young people to the status quo or liberate them from it, 'determining a clear definition or concept of youth work seems to be important...because changing political priorities are causing policy-makers to narrow and even subvert youth work practice' (Verschelden et al. 2009, p.155). Mundy-McPherson et al. (2012, p. 226) argue that the first step is the consistent and systematic use of the term 'youth work' itself. They suggest that this would bolster professional identity and professionalism, which in turn makes it easier for local, national and supranational government and funding bodies to recognise and fund (p. 226). For example, the 2014 report on *The value of youth work in the European Union* recognises the challenge of distinguishing, in practice, 'youth work' as distinct from work that takes place with young people in the domains of sports and culture; social work; youth justice; public health; guidance and counselling; and formal education (Dunne et al. 2014, pp.60–62). Although the 'porosity of youth work' can be regarded as a 'key strength' (p. 60), it should rightly be seen as a legitimate concern since 'youth work still has less prestige than other fields of social practice, such as social case work' (Baillergeau & Hoijtink 2010, p.13).

## UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK AS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

Arguably, a shared set of theories and concepts with a defined vocabulary, grouped together under the banner of 'youth work', is a necessary step if youth workers want to make the *political* case for access to 'universal youth work' as a fundamental right of all young people:

*If used universally, the term would show young people that they are accessing services that comprise a particular area of practice and a profession distinctly created and developed for supporting the development of a specific demographic group of people in society (Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012, p.226).*

To make such a case would depend on a careful analysis of the broad context of public policy in a given context. The nature of the argument would be very different in, for example, an environment dominated by neo-liberal, small state thinking, and more social democratic environments. In the former case a likely emphasis on voluntarism would mean that the case for professionalised youth work as a universal service would be a difficult one to make. In the contemporary Scottish policy context however the kind of case which this review could support would almost certainly find a less hostile reception.

### EVIDENCING IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

The lack of a consistent vocabulary across time and space in turn creates significant difficulties for evidencing the impacts and outcomes of youth work (Baillergeau & Hoijtink 2010; Fouche et al. 2010; Dickson et al. 2013). For example, using the specific term 'youth work', the 2010 New Zealand review on the *Impacts of youth work for young people* did not find any studies matching their criteria (Fouche et al. 2010). However, addressing this result, the 2013 *Systematic map of the research literature* suggested that 'reviews that broaden their criteria are likely to be more successful in identifying and finding studies which can be synthesised' (Dickson et al. 2013, p.11). Dickson et al. recognised that many practices recognisable as youth work may not be defined as such. Therefore, they employed a highly sensitive (as opposed to specific) search strategy, which sought to identify literature focusing on a particular 'approach' of working with young people, which was 'participative, dialogical and empowering' (Dickson et al. 2013, p.3). Revealingly, their search strategy involved screening over 15,000 pieces of literature, only 175 of which were ultimately included (Dickson et al. 2013, p.52).

With this in mind, Mundy-McPherson et al. (2012, p. 226) advocate for the consistent systematic use of the term 'youth work' in order that 'levels of rigour applied to intervention-effectiveness evaluations and research could be more clearly identified'. They argue that '[g]overnment, service and research institutions could work together in identifying practices that are most effective. Effectiveness could be determined through focusing on a particular field named youth work' (p. 226).

This discussion immediately opens up a number of interrelated issues. Firstly, a lack of consistent historical documentation of practice which can be shared and compared across different geographical, social and political contexts means that the development of a strong body of shared knowledge and understanding is problematic. Secondly, behind the various definitions and typologies of youth work lie a number of different (sometimes discrepant) theories and purposes. Thirdly, there are tensions to be considered, not only the tension between subjective and qualitative methods of evaluation and objective and quantitative methods, but also between the formal and the informal; between so-called 'universal' and 'targeted' forms of youth work, and all the political and philosophical debates embodied in these oppositions.

### 3.2.2 OVERCOMING FRAGMENTATION: THE NEED FOR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS OF YOUTH WORK PRACTICE

The practical day-to-day demands of youth work practice compound with frequent turnover of staff and young people to make it difficult to document and reflect on practice (Coussée, in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.9). However, without youth workers acting as 'chroniclers, remembrancers and compliers', they will remain stuck in what the late historian Eric Hobsbawm (1994, p. 3) termed a 'permanent present lacking any relation to the public past of the times they live in'.

On the basis of their literature review on youth work in the Dutch context, Baillergeau and Hoijtink (2010, p. 6) lament the fact that 'there is limited use of knowledge grounded in practical experience in the past'. Baillergeau & Hoijtink (p. 13) argue that despite existing for more than a century, there is 'amazingly little academic knowledge about youth work', 'very little data' and a lack of knowledge about what youth workers did, with whom and with what outcomes in past policy contexts when 'more funding was available'. This, they conclude, is particularly problematic given the existence of various 'negative assessments regarding the efficacy of youth work' (p. 13). Similarly, in a UK context, Jeffs (in Coussee et al. 2010, p.16) notes that:

*Few historians have moved beyond the study of youth work as an ongoing process to undertake the primary research required to understand how boys' and girls' clubs, uniformed groups, youth projects, and detached and outreach programmes worked in practice. We ought to know what it was like to be a member of a girls' club or YMCA and how it felt to be a 'client' of a detached youth project 10, 20 or 50 years ago.*

Thus, the importance of recovering grassroots histories so that 'effective youth policy and youth work...[can] be based on better knowledge of young people and historical experiences of policy and practice directed towards them' (Schlümmer, 2014, p. 7). Significantly, youth work professionals across Europe have come together at a number of conferences since 2009 in order to take on this task and document the *History of youth work in Europe*. These materials provide a rich source of historical data for any youth worker and are freely available from <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int>.

One of the contributors, Coussée (in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.8) notes that this historical work is necessary in order to address youth work's identity crisis which has led to youth work becoming 'the plaything of powerful social forces serving goals and functions that are [arguably]...improper to youth work'. Although this has been an issue common to the historical evolution of youth work across Europe, youth work's identity crisis has manifested itself differently in different countries at different times. However, Lorenz (in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.22) identifies two principal responses to youth work's identity crisis which seek to establish the 'credibility of – and confidence in – services': these are the 'functional approach' and the 'iconoclastic approach'. Both have different relationships to historical knowledge.

The 'functional approach' interprets youth work's identity crisis as an *efficiency crisis*. This 'approach neglects (or even deliberately eliminates) all reference to established traditions of principles and methodologies, value systems and intellectual continuities. Instead, such approaches seek to apply the criterion 'What works?' – the more sophisticated term (stemming significantly from medicine) is evidence-based practice' (p. 22). It has been argued that the functionalists tend to 'leave history behind, each new development turning a new page to emphasise the universality of the concepts they use, timeless and contextless' (p. 20). On the other hand, the 'iconoclastic approach' uses history to maintain a dominant position threatened by contemporary developments; a defensive and territorial reaction against 'neoliberal social policies [that] distribute tasks and contracts for services with scant regard to professional boundaries or convention.' (Lorenz, in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.22). For both of these reasons 'aspects of youth work that seem self-evident need to be situated in their historical context' (Coussée, in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.9).

In seeking to achieve this task and overcome fragmentation, contributors to this four volume series have addressed a number of questions which have allowed them to identify significant commonalities as well as differences in the historical development of youth work across Europe. These questions may sometimes be uncomfortable but in doing so they challenge us to think about contemporary practice dilemmas and understand them as historically situated developments not mere abstract currents of thought. Contributors ask:

- *'[Often] youth work seems to empower the powerful and police the vulnerable. Has it always been like that?'*
- *'When did professional youth workers make their entrance in youth work? Why? The voluntary participation of young people is another key dimension of youth work. Are there examples of compulsory youth work? How did they turn out?'*
- *Youth work usually follows social change, though sometimes youth work may be ahead? Youth workers – although youth work never was a mass activity – pretended to represent all young people. Is that why youth work seems to reinforce a divide between organised, well-educated, well-behaved, participating young people and those who are unclubbable, unorganised, marginalised, disaffected and disadvantaged?'*
- *'What was the first youth work research?...Has it fed evidence-based policy or delivered policy-based evidence?...Does youth work have (counter)productive effects? Is youth work – seen as non-formal education – measurable? What does history teach us on these recurring questions?' (Coussée, in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.10)*

These are clearly questions relevant to the two key concepts in this review—namely universal youth work (the rhetoric and reality of it) and evidence-based youth work (on whose terms?) and they point to the relevance of such inquiry to all youth workers. Gaining insights into the history of practice can help youth workers understand the ways in which youth work's enduring tension between liberation and domestication has developed in parallel with social movements and social policy responses (Lorenz, in Verschelden et al. 2009, p.26). It could reveal how—in a number of geographical and politically different contexts—youth work emerged from the formalisation of youth movements and how these movements were often not movements solely about youth but also wider social and political issues. Inversely, it could also shed light on the ways in which wider 'social problems were reframed as 'youth' problems in the legitimisation of youth work.

To conclude this section then, there is a strong argument to be made for historical research that uncovers insights and testimonies of past participants in specific practices. Secondly, contemporary conversations around the nature and purpose of youth work have much to gain when they are not approached a-historically as the free floating ideas of youth work professionals.

### 3.2.3 THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF YOUTH WORK

This section explores how youth work has been conceptualised in past reviews and places these discussions in historical context. For ease, each review from appendix 1 is summarised in chronological order.

#### **BARWICK, H., 2006. YOUTH WORK TODAY: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF YOUTH WORK IN NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. WELLINGTON: MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

In New Zealand, the nature and purpose of 'Pakeha' (non-indigenous) youth work reflects its European Christian roots in uniformed youth work organisations aiming to provide positive activities for young people in the benevolent paternalist tradition. This type of youth work was dominant from 1855 until the 1960s (Barwick 2006, p.7). From the 1960s, youth work, and particularly

'detached youth work' became a response to the public framing of young people as a problem (p. 7). However, in the 1980s political activism amongst Maori youth provided opportunities for collaboration with detached youth workers who came to embody the tension between working with young activists on their terms and being agents of social control (p. 7). In recent decades discourse shifted subtly from youth as *the risk* to 'youth *at-risk*' and the purpose of youth work was framed as facilitating the successful transition to adulthood (p. 8). In this way, New Zealand youth work exhibits a tension between the 'transitory' and 'social forum' purposes of youth work also found in the history of youth work in Europe (Taru et al. 2014, p.129). Whilst the former concerns the transition to adulthood, the latter is concerned with the provision of space for young people to address wider social issues on their terms.

According to Barwick, in Australia the conceptualisation of youth work has wrestled with the same tensions outlined above. Barwick draws on several theoretical papers, which critically examine the ambiguities and contradictions in Australian youth work rhetoric. Barwick (2006, p.12) discusses how the stated aim of starting where young people are at often clashes with the function of youth worker as the 'soft cop'. Barwick draws on claims that despite embracing a 'structuralist' rhetoric, youth workers are often immured within either 'personalist' ways of working that aim to change individuals, or 'deficit' ways of working that superficially espouse learning through participation in local decision making, but provide limited and invited participatory spaces in which to practice it. As in New Zealand, Barwick claims that Australian youth work has become driven by the trope of 'at risk' youth.

In the UK context, Barwick discusses the shifting policy landscape under New Labour. By her account, the nature and purpose of youth work in policy is also driven, at the time of writing, by a deficit model of youth. Thus debates over the nature and purpose of youth work are similar to those in New Zealand and Australia. She draws on literature that critiques the incommensurability between youth work as a process built on 'mutual trust, justice and equality' and youth work as a tool to deliver top-down policy outcomes for socially excluded young people (p. 17). This line of critique maintains that if a core value of youth work is the development of mutually respectful relationships through which opportunities for informal learning arise, such a process carries intrinsic 'risk' and cannot be 'micromanaged' (p. 17). Barwick draws on a number of commentators who argue that New Labour youth policy (with emphasis on the Connexions programme) 'does not support 'open' youth work that has no preconceived outcomes'. This is because deficit framings of young people open the way for individualistic interventions more akin to social 'case work' than processes of collective informal learning and education traditionally recognised as youth work (p. 18). To summarise, this review is useful because it reveals similar tensions in all three countries based on a move towards youth work based on helping 'risky' youth transition to adulthood.

### **SCHULMAN, S. & DAVIES, T., 2007. EVIDENCE OF THE IMPACT OF THE 'YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MODEL' ON OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A LITERATURE REVIEW. LEICESTER: NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY**

In contrast to the above review, Schulman and Davies' evidence review focuses on youth work interpreted as 'positive youth development'. Positive youth development (PYD) begins with a so-called 'assets-based' framing of young people rather than a deficit framing of young people (Schulman & Davies 2007, p.4). PYD thus focuses on the 'protective and resiliency factors all young people need to lead a healthy life' (p. 2). The authors explore the key features of PYD –which has gained considerable traction in the United States–for an 'English audience' and in doing so synthesise the literature to identify the following features (p. 5-6):

- '*PYD programmes are universal*'. In this sense, PYD is compatible with universal youth work, which is in principal open to all young people.
- '*PYD programmes are strengths-based*', 'meaning young people are conceptualised as resources to be cultivated, not problems to be solved'. In this sense too, PYD is compatible with the concept of universal youth work.
- '*PYD programmes are structured*' and aim to to 'prepare adolescents for productive

adulthood'. This means that they are ostensibly 'not prescriptive but they should be part of a coherent programmatic framework'. In this sense, PYD is less obviously compatible with the concept of universal youth work in that the emphasis is much more on the 'transitory' rather than the 'social forum' function of youth work.

- *PYD programmes link process and environment to outcomes.* At the core of the PYD process is said to be the development of 'reciprocal relationships' between young people and adults in a range of different contexts and environments. The wealth of outcomes that PYD programmes aim to achieve can be grouped under five headings: physical development; intellectual development; psychological and emotional development; social development.

In short, PYD combines 'progressive universalism' with an understanding that all 'young people are active agents' (p. 14). Very much in its favour, it also recognises that without a commitment to long-term intervention and sustained engagement, a piece of youth work cannot be classified as PYD. PYD also claims to holistically connect the biological, psychological and the social. However, in doing so there is a clear focus on individual development rather than collective learning and solidarity. Also, the aim to identify robust metrics to link process to outcome through rigorous scientific methods is somewhat at odds with the humanist rhetoric of traditional youth work, which arguably has a legacy of scepticism towards such positivist approaches.

For example, Taru et al. (2014, p.129) reflect on how historically youth work has acted as a critique of liberal individualism emphasising individual capabilities by emerging from 'ideas of solidarity, be it in terms of social class, religion or nationality/nation-state'. These authors therefore contrast PYD to the 'social pedagogy' approach, through which '[c]ommunity well-being is increased through members' devotion to the common good'. In fact, through historical analysis, they link the popularity of PYD to 'dominant neoliberal views on the relationship between individual and society' (p. 129):

*As a consequence, youth work has shifted towards the Positive Youth Development (PYD) paradigm. The American PYD paradigm is an approach which attempts to support the integration of youth in the existing social order without being very much interested in young people's opinions, especially if those do not fit in the existing social order (Taylor 2012). PYD as a concept draws its moral justification in applying principles of developmental psychology from the liberalist or libertarian conception of society.*

These youth work practitioner-researchers thus present an argument that PYD increases the tension between the 'methodological professional identity' of youth work and youth work as a fundamentally political process occurring through democratic social learning processes (p. 129). Presenting a similar argument for the UK context, Taylor (in Coussée et al. 2012, p.123) suggests that PYD was imported from North America to give a quasi-scientific gloss to managerialist 'What Works' pragmatism. Taylor argues that PYD ignores the issue of who defines positive behavioural and pro-social norms and in doing so his argument here typifies the oppositional stance towards the PYD paradigm. Taylor sees it as policy-based evidence rather than evidence-based policy (p. 123):

*When scrutinised, PYD falls at the first hurdle. The subject of its enterprise, the normal adolescent, is an ideal type distilled from all manner of comparative experiments, tests and scores...In parallel, PYD offered the prospect of the model youth worker, planning meticulously his or her scientifically predetermined programme of social integration...Its bearers into the heart of the work have been the managerialists, the external trainers and consultants.*

Of course, this feeds into much wider debates around professionalisation and process versus outcome that will be discussed shortly. Another important point to note would be that despite the



universalist rhetoric of PYD, a reasonable case could be made that this contradicts its popularity in policy contexts beginning with deficit framings of young people that in practice see PYD as a tool for working with youth at risk of social exclusion. As Schulman and Davies (2007, p.5) acknowledge:

*Pragmatism, rather than philosophy, often prevents PYD programmes from being targeted at all young people. Indeed, because youth-serving programmes typically operate in resource constrained environments (Pitman et. al 2000), many PYD programmes work with young people who lack access to the critical developmental inputs.*

## **ADAMSON, J. & POULTNEY, J., 2010. INCREASING THE ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN POSITIVE ACTIVITIES, LONDON: CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE AND OUTCOMES IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' SERVICES**

The nature and purpose of youth work in this review by and large fits in with the PYD model outlined above. This particular review more vaguely frames youth work in the language of 'positive activities'. Positive activities include, but are not limited to, community-based youth work:

*The term 'positive activities' covers adult-led structured leisure-time activities outside of school hours and taking place in, or being delivered by, children's centres, extended services, youth services, school-based extra-curricular activities, play and leisure services, sports and recreation services, private providers and the arts. Specific activities include youth groups, sports and physical activities, performing and creative arts, courses and learning-related activities (outside of school hours) and volunteering (Adamson & Poultney 2010, p.6).*

The authors of the report claim that the UK policy focus on positive activities 'stretches back to the development of youth work in the mid-to late nineteenth century, right through to the current Coalition Government's Big Society policy and, specifically for young people, the planned National Citizens Service' (p. 8). This policy context emphasises the values of voluntarism and social entrepreneurship and is part of a larger political ideology emphasising the rollback of statutory provision of universal services, including youth work.

However, the contemporary shift towards positive activities predates Big Society discourse and was ushered in during New Labour's restructuring of youth services. Critically analysing the history of youth work in the UK, Taylor (Coussée et al. 2012, p.123) views the shift towards positive activities as anathema to the principles of universal youth work:

*With the introduction of the strategy of integrated youth services, youth work as a distinctive site of practice came under increasing threat. Voluntary and open encounters with young people were perceived as inherently out of control and dangerous. Increasingly, New Labour all but deleted the term 'youth work' from their authoritarian discourse. It was replaced by the patronising and simplistic notion of 'positive activities'. Social education and informal education were declared outcasts, banished to the pedagogical wilderness.*

## **BAILLERGEAU, E. & HOIJTINK, M., 2010. YOUTH WORK AND 'YOUTH AT RISK' IN THE NETHERLANDS. SOCIETES ET JEUNESSES EN DIFFICULTE. SPECIAL ISSUE**

In the Netherlands, the nature and purpose of youth work—or 'jongerenwerk'—begins with the voluntary engagement of young people 'and not because of any judicial order—unlike some social workers' (Baillergeau & Hoijtink 2010, p.3). The authors trace Dutch youth work back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century where non-statutory youth work served two purposes; moral improvement and addressing social inequality (p. 3). The authors also typologise youth work as fulfilling the functions of education, entertainment and care/support (p. 3). Such work occurred in a variety of settings

from spaces provided by various civil society organisations to the street, facilitated by detached youth workers (p.3). Whatever the purpose or setting, the authors characterise Dutch youth work as always being primarily concerned with 'marginalised youth'.

From the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, much youth work was motivated by social and moral concern emanating from middle-class constituencies about the consequence of 'uneducated' and 'unorganised' young working classes on the streets (p. 4). However, the authors' analysis of historical material suggests that post-World War II youth organisations were relatively unsuccessful at engaging working class youth.

The authors identify the 1960s and '70s as marking a shift towards universal welfare provision. During this time, there was a corresponding shift towards the concept of *universal youth work* services open in principal to all. During this period, such services were still overwhelmingly attracting middle-class youth rather than working-class youth.

However, the 1980s marked a return to marginalised youth as the focus on youth work, only now differentiated into more nuanced 'target groups' such as homeless youth, substance abusing youth and so on (p. 5). Finally, from the 1990s onwards the purpose of youth work was aimed at so-called 'problematic youth', understood as those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Overall, the contemporary Dutch situation, just as in Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Europe more widely, is marked by a shift towards a discourse of 'youth at risk' (p. 8). The authors assert that 'Dutch youth policy is no exception in the era of the retrenchment of the Welfare state and the increasing use of targeting measures towards the less privileged layer of society in most Western countries' social policy arrangements'.

### **FOUCHE, C. ET AL., 2010. THE IMPACT OF YOUTH WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW FOR THE HEALTH COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND AND THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, AUCKLAND**

As discussed above, the authors of this review primarily focus on the lack of conceptual clarity around youth work. Somewhat confusingly, one distinction that the authors touch upon is between 'outreach' youth work aimed at young people not accessing 'building-based services' and 'detached' youth work, meaning '*social educational form of work, open-ended and broad in scope, taking place in a number of sites from the street to a range of facilities*' (Fouche et al. 2010, p.17, my italics). This latter definition aligns with the social pedagogy tradition in Europe and with the concept of universal youth work. More usefully perhaps, the authors recognise that youth work is distinguished from other forms of working with young people when the development of relationships is assigned intrinsic rather than instrumental value: 'While other professions build a relationship in order to provide a service, 'youth workers provide a service in order to build a relationship' (p. 18).

### **MCKEE, V., OLDFIELD, C. & POULTNEY, J., 2010. THE BENEFITS OF YOUTH WORK [ONLINE]. UNITE. AVAILABLE AT: [HTTP://WWW.CYWU.ORG.UK](http://www.cywu.org.uk) [ACCESSED AUGUST 15, 2014]**

This report begins with a quote from American radical and community organiser Saul Alinsky (p. 8):

*You cannot, you dare not, come to a people who are in the gutter of despair and offer them not security but supervised recreation, handicraft classes and character building. But that is what we do, come to them with bats and balls*

From the outset, the authors position themselves against the change in policy discourse towards positive activities and structured recreation. McKee et al. state that youth work is premised on voluntary engagement, processes of group-based experiential learning and personal and social development (p.8). The authors recognise the explicitly educational (as opposed to the merely

recreational) function of youth work and stress that this should not be subordinated to a kind of 'stepping stone' provision to address concerns about young people labelled as NEET. This report recognises the role of universal services, targeted services as well as detached and building-based work. Beyond this, it does not theorise or conceptualise youth work. It reviews the literature in relation to the outcomes of youth work rather than youth work theory. Overall, it is concerned to make the case for recognising the distinctive contribution of youth work within the policy of language of positive activities and integrated services (p. 31).

## **DICKSON, K., VIGURS, C.-A. & NEWMAN, M., 2013. YOUTH WORK: A SYSTEMATIC MAP OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE, DUBLIN: DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

Whilst the previous report took a literalist and specific approach to searching for youth work literature, this review took what is known as a sensitive approach to searching for youth work literature, meaning that it found relevant literature that other more specific and literal searches did not find. However, this means dealing with a high volume of less relevant material.

This review begins with the insight from the Irish National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007 that the principal purpose of youth work is 'the education of young people in non-formal settings, and education is by definition a planned, purposeful and conscious process' (Dickson et al. 2013, p.8). The review then goes on to list the following characteristics of the youth work process as laid out in the development plan (p. 8-9):

- *Intends to build mutually trustful and respectful relationships with and between young people, into which they normally enter by choice*
- *Occurs mainly in informal community-based settings, but not exclusively*
- *Works through purposeful practices tailored to the interests and concerns, needs, rights and responsibilities of young people, giving priority to how they identify and understand these*
- *Seeks to build personal and social competencies and capacities*
- *Favours active, experiential and collective learning over didactic and individualised forms, or predetermined curricula*
- *Encourages young people to participate voluntarily where they are supported to work with adults in partnership*
- *Provides opportunities that are developmental, educative, challenging, supportive and creative, and are intended and designed to extend young people's power over their own lives and within their wider society*
- *Seeks to enable young people to clarify and embrace key features of their individual and collective identities in relation to class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability*
- *Supports young people as they deal with difficulties, threats and risks.*

By understanding youth work as a specific approach, the authors consider a wide range of literature not defined as such. Specifically, the authors draw heavily on the US-based PYD literature arguing that it fulfils the criteria of the youth work approach laid out above. In their descriptive synthesis, the authors report that 73% of the literature reported 'which theory informed their activities' (Dickson et al. 2013, p.23). The authors group the various theories into the following categories:

- Positive Youth Development (33 studies);
- Socio-ecological model (8 studies);

- Empowerment (8 studies);
- Developmental assets (5 studies);
- Other (e.g. social capital, experiential education, service learning pedagogy, relational theory, critical consciousness) (25 studies).

The PYD model, which has already been discussed is concerned with 'the promotion of a range of social, cognitive emotional, behavioural and moral competencies, including provision of recognition for positive behaviour, opportunities for pro-social involvement, and promotion of pro-social norms' (p. 23).

The 'socio-ecological model', the authors assert, is similar to the PYD model (p. 24) in that 'this approach also believes that the practice of youth work needs to reflect and address the dynamic relationship that young people have with others, as well as the wider context of their lives, if it is to be successful'. With this being said, the following description seems to leave open more possibility for youth work as a political practice than PYD:

*Young people are encouraged to 'use an ecological framework to explore their 'multiple selves' in different socio-geographic contexts'. They 'also engage in critical analysis of socio-historical antecedents, power analysis and an examination of policies, laws, organisations and cultural practices that affect their lives and that they wish to understand and alter'.*

Similarly, the 'empowerment approach' argues that positive outcomes for young people follow from developing the tools to critically analyse the operation of economic, political and social power and authority through informal learning processes (p. 24). Through discussion with stakeholders, the researchers grouped the purposes of youth work in the studies under the following headings:

- *personal and social development (n=71)*
- *social change (n=28)*
- *education and career (n=24)*
- *safety and well-being (n=26)*
- *contribution to society (n=20).*

The authors acknowledge that these theories and categories are porous. However, it seems that employability-related activities did not bleed over into addressing any other aims (p. 28). The authors also assert that a number of alternative categorisations could have been equally credible (p. 24).

## **DUNNE, A. ET AL., 2014. WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: THE VALUE OF YOUTH WORK IN THE EUROPEAN UNION. BRUSSELS: EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

The authors of this review draw on Trudi Cooper's argument that 'renewed models of youth work' are 'urgently needed' because a theory base 'is essential to explain the contribution of practice to others outside the occupation' (Dunne et al. 2014, p.56). The authors synthesise the literature and take into account the previous reviews attempts to do so. In doing so, they contend that the 'theoretical/conceptual models for youth work could be said to principally centre themselves on some key identifiable views about young people' (p. 59). These are:

- Treatment approaches;
- Reform approaches;

- Advocacy;
- Empowerment.

Treatment approaches start from the premise that young people are problematic 'and must be 'treated' in order to have them conform to societal norms'. Reform approaches speak the language of social exclusion and tailor youth work interventions to 'disadvantaged' young people in order to integrate them into prevailing social norms. Advocacy approaches 'are closer to the empowerment model and what Hurley and Treacy described as 'critical social education' compared to the reform or treatment models, in that it sees societal structures as being problematic and disempowering young people'.

The authors go on to provide a very succinct typology of youth work, based on two axes: 'objectives' (broad personal development or addressing specific issues); and 'target' (universal, targeted towards specific groups). This produces the following four types of youth work in the table below.

### **TYPOLOGY OF YOUTH WORK**

<b>Personal development – Universal</b>	<b>Specific issue(s) – Universal</b>
<b>Personal development - Target group</b>	<b>Specific issue(s) - Target group</b>

The authors thus argue that universal youth work provision exists on a spectrum moving from open access work with an equally open purpose and curriculum to a pre-determined focus on specific intervention outcomes. It is important to recognise that in reality much provision lies somewhere on a spectrum. Similarly, provision that is universal in principle may in reality target specific groups, whether this targeting is tacit, implicit or otherwise.

### **3.3 WHAT DO EXISTING REVIEWS TELL US ABOUT THE IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES OF UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK PROVISION?**

On the basis of existing reviews, evidence connecting positive outcomes to youth work practice is overwhelmingly found in evaluations of PYD interventions. Although PYD has been critically contrasted to youth work (focusing more on transition from adolescence to adulthood rather than acting as a collective social forum), progressive universalism is one key feature of the PYD approach. For this reason, such findings are included here. The following summarises the findings of the outcomes-focused reviews in chronological order.

#### **SCHULMAN, S. & DAVIES, T., 2007. EVIDENCE OF THE IMPACT OF THE 'YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MODEL' ON OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A LITERATURE REVIEW. LEICESTER: NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY**

Schulman and Davies (2007, p. 34) write that 'programmes that do embrace a positive youth development framework report both an increase in positive developmental outcomes, particularly skill-based competencies, and a decrease in incidences of risk behaviour'.

Summarising results from the US National Research Council's (USNRC) own research, the authors report that '[e]ffective mental health and violence prevention programmes adopted many of the features of positive youth development programmes, including a focus on building core competencies, opportunities to practise new skills, and access to strong adult social support' (p.

23). That said, such targeted forms of intervention would seem to exclude them from the definition of universal youth work adopted in this report.

The holistic focus on PYD places emphasis on the relations between different 'domains', namely 'family, community and school' (p. 23). Interestingly, the authors report that PYD programmes are more effective when all of these domains are coherently connected. When family, community and school domains are all joined-up, evidence shows that 'participants experienced outcomes such as higher levels of social skills learning, greater self-efficacy, higher levels of community service, and greater cognitive competence' (p. 23).

The authors state that due to the lack of robust comparable outcome measures, it is not possible to say whether or not PYD is more effective than other 'youth serving programmes' (p. 24). Moreover, the authors state that at the time of writing nothing could be concluded about the 'link between programmatic attributes, developmental outcomes, and subject population' (p. 25). Lastly, due to a lack of longitudinal data, the authors concluded that no firm conclusions could be drawn about the ability of PYD to facilitate successful youth 'transitions' to 'adulthood'.

### **ADAMSON, J. & POULTNEY, J., 2010. INCREASING THE ENGAGEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN POSITIVE ACTIVITIES, LONDON: CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE AND OUTCOMES IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' SERVICES**

This review was influenced by the New Labour policy turn away from youth work characterised by open voluntary relationships and towards so-called 'positive activities' (Taylor, in Coussée et al. 2012, p.123). However, the reason why it is included here is that within this policy rhetoric, a universalist approach is discernible in the authors' recommendation that positive outcomes might best be achieved by 'targeting all young people, not just specific groups' (p. 3). However, this is tempered with pragmatic caution since 'universal provision may incur increased costs' and 'there is a lack of robust evidence around the cost-benefit analysis of young people's participation in positive activities and the social return on investment that participation may bring' (p. 3).

What stands out in this report, as in the last, is the assertion that there is 'relatively little 'hard evidence' of outcomes' beyond 'qualitative research and self-reported impacts' (p. 19). Despite this, the authors find sufficient grounds to claim that participation in 'positive activities' can positively impact on 'personal, social and emotional development' (p. 20). Since there is at best a tenuous connection between the 'social pedagogical' tradition of universal youth work and 'adult-led' positive activities this section will be brief. The key findings of note here are as follows (p. 19):

- Participation in positive activities can improve 'self-esteem; confidence and aspiration; team-working; and social skills'
- Such positive outcomes can transfer to 'academic learning'
- Positive outcomes for young people require relationships forged over long-term periods of sustained engagement
- There can be a wider benefit to 'local communities through building social capital and community cohesion'.

Again, these rather general outcomes obviously resonate with the CfE four capacities. However, the discursive marginalisation of youth work is concerning when coupled with the report's seemingly glib endorsement of the potential link between positive activities and the contrived rhetoric of the 'Big Society' (p. 23). Addressing potentially negative outcomes, the authors cite that they might be attributed to 'the potential networking effect of bringing together the riskiest young people' (p. 23). On the one hand, this provides an argument for universal provision, which

does not segregate target groups. After all, there is evidence to suggest that young people are themselves sceptical of the stigmatising effect of participating in youth work interventions (see, for example, Bradford & Byrne 2010). On the other, it demonstrates how social science concepts such as social capital can be deployed to pathologise young individuals whose 'risky' social capital needs to be supplemented by the 'good' bridging social capital of privileged groups. Such language clearly parallels an older historical tradition of youth work as a response to middle-class moral panic, which has surely been discredited by youth workers and youth movements who favour a broad concern for social justice.

### **FOUCHE, C. ET AL., 2010. THE IMPACT OF YOUTH WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW FOR THE HEALTH COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND AND THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, AUCKLAND.**

This review epitomises two extremes: firstly, the nominalist approach to the systematic review (they do not consider anything not explicitly called 'youth work') secondly, the uncompromising positivist approach to what constitutes robust evidence.

This report finds no evidence by its own criteria, but the authors make it clear that the 'lack of evidence from an empty review is not an indication of a lack of effect' (Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012, p.219). This review considered evidence generated from the following (p. 217):

*Intervention (controlled) studies, including randomised controlled trials (RCT) and prospective non-randomised controlled trials were considered in the review, as were descriptive studies, including cohort studies, case-control studies and nested case control studies*

Due to a lack of comparable, precisely used concepts and the fact that the available data was mostly qualitative and [did] not entail the use of experimental, randomly controlled trials of interventions', the result was an 'empty review' (p. 222). This 'non-finding' was in itself useful for flagging up pertinent issues. Firstly, after seeking out grey literature, 'over 300 documents were viewed by youth work practitioners or organisations as evidence of the impact of youth work' (p. 222). The researchers make the point that 'the gap between what is viewed by practitioners and organisations as evidence and what is acknowledged by research methods as evidence is also a significant review finding' (p. 222).

Speculating on the reasons why this might be so, the authors identify ideological and epistemological conflicts:

- *Ideological conflicts*: the authors call this 'reactionary thinking': 'the resistance, if not opposition, to the rigorous evaluation of youth work is often based on a suspicion that evaluation has a management orientation' (p. 224)
- *Epistemological conflicts*: this means disputes over what counts as knowledge and whose ways of knowing are valued. Here the authors bemoan the tendency of experienced practitioners to believe that 'a good story about youth work outcomes and the experiences of long-standing practitioners are the route to identifying the effectiveness of interventions' and that 'giving voice through qualitative work is inherently more relational (and therefore more youth work appropriate), than quantitative research (p. 226)'.

### **MCKEE, V., OLDFIELD, C. & POULTNEY, J., 2010. THE BENEFITS OF YOUTH WORK [ONLINE]. UNITE.**

Available at: <http://www.cywu.org.uk>.

This report contains quite a robust review of (predominantly but not entirely) grey literature in relation to the outcomes of youth work in the UK. The evidence is comprised mainly of government reports and project evaluations undertaken by third sector organisations. The

evidence for positive outcomes is organised under the following headings relevant to Scottish National Outcome areas (McKee et al. 2010, pp.14–26):

- Keeping young people healthy (relevant to GIRFEC)
- Keeping young people safe (relevant to GIRFEC)
- Supporting learning (relevant to CfE)
- Making a positive contribution (relevant to CfE)

A range of evidence is cited to support the contribution that youth work makes across these outcomes areas. There is not a thorough breakdown of the study designs and data collection methods of the various studies and the approaches of the review are not fully disclosed. However, all evidence is fully referenced for the readers to consult themselves. McKee et al. cite evidence that 'open access and targeted youth work include a range of enjoyable activities intended to promote healthy lifestyles' (p. 14). The authors cite evidence from Sheffield Hallam University, the University of Bristol and Ofsted suggesting that 'open door free access' policies and informal community-based settings were key success factors in bringing about positive health outcomes for young people in the areas of sexual health, drugs and alcohol use (p. 15-16).

One section focuses on evidence around keeping young people safe from prostitution, violent crime and gang activity. It cites evidence mainly from evaluations of targeted provision. Another section, on learning, gives attention to the role of youth work in producing positive learning outcomes for 'hard-to-reach' young people, drawing on evidence from a range of interventions, some of which are open access. Voluntary engagement is cited as an important principal 'regardless of the setting' (p. 19). Moreover, the authors draw on interviews with young people, which suggest that a key success factor is provision that is open yet evolves to meet their needs as they grow through the process (p. 19). Lastly, the authors provide evidence to suggest that youth work empowers young people with skills for active citizenship, with potential to contribute positively to increased 'community cohesion' (p. 23-4).

**Dickson, K., Vigurs, C.-A. & Newman, M., 2013. Youth work: A systematic map of the research literature, Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs.**

As discussed above, the authors of this report consider youth work as a way of working, and in doing so, include the PYD literature. In doing so, the primary vein of literature they draw on is from various 'youth work' interventions in the United States. Thus, differences in social, political, economic and educational context should be taken into account when considering the extent to which any of these findings can inform the Scottish context.

**Outcomes identified from studies evaluating effectiveness\***

Outcomes	Examples of common individual measures	No. of studies
Relationship with others	Positive peer relationships; positive relationships with adults; pro-social skills; leadership skills; decision-making skills; empowerment	66
Sense of self	Personal development; self-esteem; confidence; self-efficacy; identity; character	64
Community and society	Civic engagement; strengthen bonds to community; partnership working; develop new social interests	36
Health and well-being	Reduced alcohol/substance misuse; diversion from crime; prevention of risky behaviours; making healthy choices; general mental health	36
Values and beliefs	Future aspirations; values; positive diversity attitudes	30
Formal education and training	Academic achievement; strengthen bonds to school	27

\* Not mutually exclusive



**Outcomes identified by Dickson et al's synthesis of studies measuring effectiveness. Reproduced from Dickson et al. (2013, p. 29).**

These outcomes from the international literature are broadly compatible with the intended outcomes of youth work as defined in YouthLink Scotland's *Statement on the Nature and Purpose of Youth Work*:

- Build self-esteem and self-confidence
- Develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships
- Create learning and develop new skills
- Encourage positive group atmospheres
- Build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control
- Develop a 'world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment.

However, the authors of this report *do not* comment on the extent to which these outcomes are fulfilled in the studies drawn upon. Rather, the focus of the commentary is more on the methods used in relation to outcomes focused upon. Case studies utilising one or more qualitative methods was the most common approach. However, they note that:

*Without determining a 'starting point' (such as what young people's relationships were like before, or how confident young people were previous to participation in youth work activities), it is difficult to ascertain whether youth work activities have an impact on particular outcomes' (Dickson et al. 2013, p.36).*

Nevertheless, the authors report 18 studies with 'single group' 'before' and 'after' designs that do address this weakness. However, a further weakness in such studies is a lack of control group, meaning that it is not possible to attribute pre and post intervention changes to youth work (p. 36). Further up what some call the 'hierarchy of evidence', the researchers did identify 26 studies using either controlled trials or randomised controlled trials. Finally, only two studies that they identified used longitudinal 'time series' designs.

In terms of identifying studies that tried to measure the association between programme attributes (what the authors here call 'factors') and specific outcomes, the authors say that regression techniques and statistical modelling were the most popular methods of analysis (p. 39). The authors do not draw many conclusions regarding substantive outcomes themselves as their aim was to descriptively 'map the literature'. In fact, they conclude that it was 'not possible to specify which youth activities were associated with particular outcomes' (p. 43). Although it might be possible to make substantive inferences about outcomes through a deeper engagement with the PYD literature that they draw upon, the extent to which PYD is compatible with universal youth work remains a contentious issue.

This will likely remain a matter of interpretation to be resolved by practitioners themselves. However, speaking to the Irish policy context, the authors of this report make the following assessment (p. 43):

*We found that the ethos of youth work in Ireland, which emphasizes collaboration, empowerment and personal and social development, is also shared by...youth provision which falls under the umbrella of 'positive youth development'... A recent survey of youth work provision in Ireland conducted by Powell et al (2010, p. 58) found that...'social and personal development' was considered to be the core element, in addition to 'social*

*education' and 'empowerment of marginalised young people'...The authors also found that the majority of youth provision is 'open' and accessible to all young people.*

Lastly, in relation to outcomes, the researchers make the valuable point that there is scant interest in either the intrinsic value of youth work for young people, or any potential pernicious outcomes arising from youth work participation. This they note, despite increasing financial pressure to assess the efficacy of youth work in terms of costs and benefits (p. 44).

## **DUNNE, A. ET AL., 2014. WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: THE VALUE OF YOUTH WORK IN THE EUROPEAN UNION. BRUSSELS: EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

This report 'concludes that youth work practice contributes to both personal and societal positive outcomes (Dunne et al. 2014, p.180)'. However, the authors also recognise that 'emphasis should not only be on outcomes, but youth work processes and activities should be valued' and its value should not be solely determined by the unrealistic expectations of policy makers looking for cost-effective fixes for structurally engrained problems (p. 180).

That being said, since the publication of the previous report (Dickson et al. 2013) which highlighted the lack of cost-benefit analysis, work has been undertaken to address this gap. Dunne et al (2014, p. 141) comment on its findings:

*Most research that attempted to assess the economic impact of youth work focused on comparing the costs and benefits of youth work in one specific area such as crime prevention, public health, education or welfare. The benefits of those interventions that were rigorously evaluated systematically outweighed the costs of programmes. Extrapolating from existing research a study in Ireland made an overall assessment of the cost-benefits ration of youth work. The study found not only that the benefits outweigh the costs but also that the ratio of benefits versus costs was 2.22:1. For each euro of costs the value of benefits is 2.2 euro.*

Such findings can be used by youth work practitioners seeking to advocate for youth work through the language of cost-benefit calculus. However, to the extent that advocating for youth work as a social movement involves the production of broad shifts in public opinion, arguments must be couched in terms of social values and norms. Recent Third Sector research (Holmes et al. 2011) has found that expressing arguments for social and environmental justice in cost-benefit terms merely reinforces *extrinsic values* in the long-term, whilst undermining the *intrinsic values* that youth work has traditionally aimed to promote.

This is based on research by social psychologist Shalom Schwartz which claims that different values and the relationships between them are universal, transcultural and can be broadly divided into two categories: those deemed intrinsic and those deemed extrinsic. Intrinsic values are those such as 'affiliation to friends and family, connection with nature, concern for others, self-acceptance, social justice and creativity', which are 'intrinsically rewarding to pursue' (Holmes, et al., 2011, p. 21). Extrinsic values are deemed to be those 'centred on external approval or rewards', such as 'wealth, material success, concern about image, social status, prestige, social power and authority' (p. 21). Cost-benefit calculus belongs to the latter whilst the former are more closely related to the aims of youth work. This work on universal values presents a potentially interesting agenda for youth work advocacy in that it has implications for how we frame our practice in order to secure public support.

Cost-benefit analysis notwithstanding, this review, like those that have preceded it, provides a robust list of positive outcomes whilst linking them to EU youth strategy. However, in producing this list the authors seem to conflate intended outcomes with proven outcomes (p. 180):

*Evidence was stronger in relation to some areas by comparison to others; therefore*

outcomes are also presented in terms of how youth work is expected to contribute to those areas on the basis of the objectives of activities collected in the case studies and country reports.

The outcomes are listed below (reproduced from Dunne et al. 2014, p. 180-181):

## **Education and training outcomes**

- Improves non-cognitive skills and results in better academic outcomes and qualifications;
- Provides alternative pathways for young people who drop out of education and training;
- Provides educational and career guidance;
- Offers opportunities for further development.

## **Employment and entrepreneurship outcomes**

- Develops skills that are valued by labour markets;
- Provides skills needed for job searching and securing a job;
- Offers an opportunity to practice one's skills in a real setting and to provide such evidence to employers;
- Provides guidance, counselling and sometimes job matching.

## **Health and well-being outcomes**

- Provides access to information and trusted advice;
- Contributes to changes in attitudes and behaviours;
- Raises self-awareness;
- Improves the well-being of young people.

## **Participation of young people**

- Positive impact on participation and the democratic processes;
- Raises awareness amongst young people;
- Develops critical thinking;
- Empowers young people and stimulates activism;
- Provides opportunities for young people to express themselves.

## **Volunteering outcomes**

- Hosts many volunteers;
- Values and recognises the contribution of volunteering to personal development;
- Promotes volunteering in the community;
- Is related to engagement in volunteering at a later stage in life.

## **Social Inclusion outcomes**

- Are based on the process of socialisation, thus aims to put young people on a trajectory of social inclusion;
- Reaches out to those who are disadvantaged and at risk of exclusion, but the outreach could be improved.

## **Youth and the world outcomes**

- Develops skills and attitudes such as persistence, self-reliance, global awareness, adaptability, etc.;
- Raises the awareness of human rights, development issues and global themes;
- Provides education for sustainable development.

## **Culture outcomes**

- Increase the practice of cultural activities amongst young people;
- Provide a space for expression and creativity;
- Promote intercultural understanding, health and well-being and media literacy;
- Broadly impact on young people's development.

These outcomes are so wide ranging that it is easy to see how they fit with the Scottish National Outcomes. The following will summarise the synthesised findings from the various outcome areas.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Synthesising the results of at least four studies, Dunne et al (2014, p. 143) conclude that non-formal learning activities that youth work provides can benefit achievement in formal educational settings. More specifically, they found that:

*... disadvantaged young people in particular can benefit from activities that help them improve non-cognitive skills. These skills lead to better academic outcomes and higher qualifications. Youth work offers such development opportunities.*

In relation to training, the researchers also found that 'the sector of youth work plays an important role in providing alternative pathways for young people who drop out of education and training' (p. 144). The reasons cited for the specific effectiveness of youth work approaches were flexibility, adaptability, a person centred approach and peer support networks. The researchers also concluded that youth work plays a role in offering accessible 'educational and career guidance' (p. 145). Lastly, with respect to universal provision, the researchers provide evidence to suggest that 'youth work also offers opportunities to gifted young people to further develop' (p. 145).

## EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In addition to finding evidence that youth work helps to develop what might be termed 'soft skills' valued by employers (team work, communication, self-confidence, organisation and planning), the evidence suggests that one challenge for youth work is making participants able to articulate the skills that they develop through participation (p. 146). In addition to competencies, youth work (specifically in collaboration with trade unions) can help young people to become aware of their rights with respect to the labour market and the workplace (p. 148).

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Evidence suggests that youth work plays an important role in health and wellbeing. Insights from PYD and so-called socio-ecological approaches are valuable here since we cannot consider youth work in isolation from other services, which also play important roles in delivering positive outcomes for young people. Youth work clearly acts as an important bridge between young people and access to more formal services impacting on health and wellbeing. Dunne et al. (2014, p.63) found that:

*By working with young people in schools or hospitals, youth workers are able to help young people to make better use of those services, and in some cases, enable the services themselves to become more responsive and effective.*

Dunne et al. (p. 149) cite evidence, including a study by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which points to *sexual behaviour* and *substance abuse* as two areas where the contribution of youth work is compelling. The successful factors contributing to such health and wellbeing outcomes are young people's *participation* in shaping processes, *peer-to-peer* support and *cultural sensitivity* with regards to place and people (p. 150).

## PARTICIPATION AND VOLUNTEERING

The authors synthesise evidence from longitudinal studies, which show that participation in 'extra-curricular' clubs and activities has positive impacts on political engagement in later life even when controlling for 'class background and other school memberships' (p. 152). Moreover, such extra-curricular activities are not explicitly political activities like youth councils or forums, but

include arts-based activities (p. 153). There is also evidence that volunteering in extra-curricular activities as a young person positively impacts on participation in voluntary activities in later life (p. 156). Specifically with respect to volunteering, the authors state that 'there is no quantitative evidence, it can be assumed that youth work accounts for increasing numbers of volunteers and in particular, from amongst young people' (p. 156).

## **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK**

The authors of this report specifically address the 'effects of universal youth work on those who are at greater risk of exclusion' (p. 157). They conclude there is enough evidence to suggest that participation in universal youth work 'can positively affect academic achievement, even of young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds' (p. 158). With regards to the development of soft-skills ('transversal skills' they say) for employability, the authors conclude that 'there is a lack of evidence of the effectiveness of these kinds of measures on disadvantaged young people' (p. 157). With regards to health and wellbeing outcomes, the authors find that the 'evidence identified does not focus specifically on the impact on disadvantaged youth' (p. 157).

## **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND CULTURE**

The authors state that youth work can provide a pathway for international volunteering. They draw on an evidence review on the impacts of international volunteering and find that it has the following positive outcomes (p. 159):

- Developing cultural awareness and global awareness
- Developing self-sufficiency, resilience and self-confidence
- Developing conflict resolution, negotiation and communication skills.

The evidence suggests that the positive effect on civic engagement through international volunteering is strongest amongst 'young people from disadvantaged backgrounds' (p. 159). The authors draw on a systematic review on the *Impact of engagement in culture and sport* for young people's learning. This report, commissioned by the Culture and Sports Evidence Programme in the UK found 'evidence of positive outcomes on the academic attainment of students, early literacy skills, cognitive abilities and transferable skills' (p. 161). They also cite US-based longitudinal research which found a positive relationship between participation in arts-based activities and:

- Civic engagement (regardless of socio-economic category)
- Academic achievement (particularly for young people from lower socio-economic categories).

## **SUCCESS FACTORS**

On the basis of their evidence review, the authors assert that it is the combination of the provision of 'supportive and safe environments' with 'autonomy' for participants to shape the process and purpose of the work that 'leads to positive outcomes' (p. 179). More exhaustively, this literature review provides the following list of factors leading to 'positive outcomes'. (p. 179):

- *The youth worker's relationship with young people*
- *Active outreach to young people in need of help and support*
- *Flexibility, accessibility and adapting to the needs of young people*
- *Learning opportunities, goal setting and recognition of achievements*
- *Safe, supportive environments enabling young people to experience life, to make mistakes*

and to participate with their peers in leisure time activities in an enjoyable and fun setting

- *'Standing on their feet': allowing young people to drive their own learning and development and to have autonomy*
- *Sustainability and partnerships with other actors (e.g. formal education, social work)*
- *Commitment from young people, youth workers and the community.*

Finally, the researchers draw on evidence which suggests that there are specific groups of young people which youth work fails to reach or who choose not to participate. These are (p. 182):

- *'Older' age cohorts of young people (i.e. young people aged 18+)*
- *Those who are no longer in education (i.e. those in employment or unemployed)*
- *Young people living in rural areas*
- *Those from a migrant background, and other minority groups*
- *Those who are from vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances.*

The authors therefore conclude that 'whilst some young people gain the maximum advantage of youth work, many of those who have perhaps the greatest potential to benefit from youth work are not currently being reached in practice' (p. 182). An ongoing challenge for universal provision is therefore to distinguish between openness in principle and openness in practice. Although it might be easy to conclude that more targeted interventions are necessary to address this issue, it can also be argued that the success of many of the outcome areas above is based on the principles of voluntary engagement, openness, leading to dialogical and informal learning across institutional, generational and cultural boundaries.

### **3.4 CHALLENGES FOR UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK**

Across Europe, universal youth work is under threat:

*The priorities for public funding of youth work have changed. There is greater emphasis on youth work targeted at giving young people better opportunities on the labour market and in education. Focus is increasingly on funding support to those who are socially excluded. Organisations providing universal youth work increasingly struggle to get public funding... With less funding there is increasing emphasis on youth work with an identifiable effect and return on investment (Dunne et al. 2014, pp.12–13).*

Within this austere social policy landscape of cost-benefit calculus, evidence-based policy will continue to dominate. The UK is not unique in this regard. Similar patterns can be observed across Europe and beyond. Universal youth work straddles the tension between youth work as an open process (in terms of access and 'curriculum') based on principles of experiential learning and social pedagogy and youth work as a scientific methodology with an internationally shared family of concepts which can translate into measurable outcomes. In the former mould, universal youth work always entails a degree of risk and indeterminacy. This is clearly anathema to policy based on rhetoric of youth constructed as *the risk* and *at-risk*. The second interpretation brings us closer to the literature around PYD, which espouses universal access in principle but not in practice, due to pragmatic funding considerations. The PYD process is undoubtedly driven by a more prescriptive set of concepts and individualistic outcome measures derived from developmental psychology.

The standard critique of universalism in any area (including youth work) is that the rhetoric at best does not match, and at worst obfuscates, the reality of practice. On the one hand, those who would benefit the most from open-access youth work are often least in attendance (e.g. Verschelden et al. 2009, p.10; Baillergeau & Hoijtink 2010, p.5; Dunne et al. 2014, p.63). On the other, and perhaps as a consequence, the universalist rhetoric of much youth provision under

the banner of PYD belies the fact that it is aimed in practice at *risky* youth (Schulman & Davies 2007). Therefore, from a social justice perspective, a challenge for universal youth work practice is to demonstrate that it is not simply driven by the tacit desire to assimilate so-called risky youth into dominant social norms embodied by more privileged young people, without challenging the legitimacy of those norms.

From the above reviews, there seems to be evidence that sustained engagement with open access youth provision can deliver a number of positive outcomes complementary to the Scottish National Outcomes. However, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the current challenges for universal youth work are a direct result of changes in funding regimes (Dunne et al. 2014, p.73). A major challenge for universal youth work is how it can be advocated for in such an environment.

The literature in this section presents some dilemmas. One being whether or not to frame arguments solely in terms of cost-benefit analysis or not. This is really a challenge about how to argue for funding for sustainable universal provision in so-called post-welfare societies. Although 'playing the game' may be to an extent unavoidable, it may feasibly incentivise certain 'perverse outcomes' (Sandel, 2012). Firstly, the pressure to evidence concrete outcomes can incentivise 'cherry-picking' in terms of who youth workers and organisations encourage to participate and what outcomes they choose to focus their attention on. This has been described by several authors (e.g. Tiffany, 2007; Couseé et al. 2010, p. 138; Lorenz et al., 2010, p. 34) addressing universal provision as the 'pistachio effect' because the 'hardest nuts' to 'crack' are either left until later or cast aside altogether.

A second effect is related to the effect of competition on the youth work sector as a whole. As statutory mainstream provision is increasingly transferred to the Third Sector, 'competition for funds may contradict the common expectation (of society and politics) that youth work organisations also have to collaborate with each other' (Dunne et al., 2014, p. 73). In this circumstance it is incumbent on advocates for universal youth work to remember that universal youth work is part of a larger discussion about the role of the state in providing universal services. As McKee and Stuckler (2011) argue, the drive towards targeted interventions is part of an ideologically-driven process of 'root-and-branch' welfare reform, such that those with the means are encouraged not to depend on statutory provision in many welfare areas. If people feel that welfare services are not 'for them', the services face a downward spiral as those with the least capacity are left to advocate for them.

### **3.5 MAPPING THE SPECTRUM OF EVIDENCE**





The final challenge for universal youth work relates to the evidence base: what counts as evidence? What research needs to be undertaken to fill in gaps in the evidence base? It seems clear that the first question is loaded. Reviewing the existing reviews, it is tempting to suggest that there are three ways of looking at this, each of which suggests different professional roles for the youth worker, associated with different contexts and approaches. Each of these in turn leads to an emphasis on different kinds of evidence. The framework that emerges is shown in the table on the following page.

In the first conception, evidence is subordinated to the overall function of persuasion of power holders, content as we are in the tacit knowledge that good youth work works. In this circumstance it is not a stretch to suggest that the study of political rhetoric, framing, behavioural economics, social movement studies and related fields could be of use to the field. The question of 'what works' is one of political persuasion. In the second conception, the youth worker is concerned that evidence arises from democratic processes of social learning that relate to the lived experience of young people and give voice to this experience. In the third conception, questions of social justice and less grandiosely, positive outcomes, are the domain of the technical expert. These three tensions are summarised by Mundy-McPherson et al. (2012, pp. 224-227), whilst

they clearly favour the third approach:

*There is a clear indication that the resistance, if not opposition, to the rigorous evaluation of youth work is often based on a suspicion that evaluation has a management orientation... There is a politically pragmatic alternative, if questionable, route that youth work could take in establishing the credibility of youth work effectiveness...[A] telling of a story of how someone had achieved in life as a result of [youth work]...[A researcher of U.S education policy advocacy]...thought that people, from practitioners to politicians, believed they knew the reasons for outcomes based on their political philosophies, such that the policy implications of scientific findings are less influential than extant beliefs...What could be termed reactionary thinking and behaviour can be identified, questioning the motivations of rigorous evaluation and leading to the rhetoric and practice of valuing qualitative evaluations over quantitative evaluations, believing giving voice through qualitative work is inherently more relational (and therefore more youth work appropriate), than quantitative research...[However], rigour and precision are important for the scientific creation, application, verification and dissemination of knowledge.*

### UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK - A SPECTRUM OF EVIDENCE

Rhetorical View of Young People	Focus of Practice	Measured Outcomes	Forms of Evidence	Professional Role	Context of Measurement	Approach
Positive    Negative	Universal	Soft Indicators	Qualitative	Youth Worker as Advocate	The Politics of what works? (playing the game)	Pragmatic
	  Targeted	  Hard Indicators	  Quantitative	Youth Worker as Informal Educator	Validating experiential learning	Relational
				Youth Worker as Social Scientist	Techno-rational Justification	Rationalist

For some commentators, the kind of evidence that is needed is through scientific evaluations of large and long-term initiatives (Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012, p.225). However, this leaves smaller organisations vulnerable. Dickson et al. (2013, p. 46-47) point to work from the *Heritage Lottery Fund*, *Dartington Research in Practice* and the *Young Foundation*, which tries to address this problem. They also reason that:

*It might be more appropriate for some youth work services to conduct smaller scale research projects, utilising qualitative research methods generalisable to a specific geographical location or group of children and young people compared to an evaluation that uses survey methods to evaluate the use and outcomes of youth clubs.*

The final section of this chapter below summarises what these reviews can tell us about gaps in the evidence and therefore, opportunities for further research:



## 3.6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

### 3.6.1 HISTORICAL RESEARCH

'Unwritten' historical accounts of universal youth work practice present a potentially rich vein of data. We still simply need to know more about actual universal youth work practice, both from the perspectives of youth workers and adults who once participated in such practices as young people (e.g. Verschelden et al. 2009; Cousse et al. 2010; Baillergeau & Hoijfink 2010; Coussée et al. 2012; Taru et al. 2014). Particularly with regards to long-term positive outcomes, community history projects represent a promising avenue for research.

### 3.6.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND OUTCOMES

It is clear from existing reviews that the evidence cannot yet tell us what theoretical approaches contribute to which outcomes and why (Schulman & Davies 2007, p.24; Dickson et al. 2013, p.43; Dunne et al. 2014, p.59). Potentially, an in-depth appraisal of the PYD literature identified by Dickson et al. could address this, but on the other hand it is by no means clear that PYD and universal youth work are synonymous concepts and practices. There also seems to be very limited evidence in relation to the question of how particular types of provision affect the outcomes on various demographics of young people, suggesting that there is a long way to go to answer the research question: *are there particular associations between types of provision and economic, demographic or social factors? If so what are they?*

### 3.6.3 COMPONENTS OF PROGRAMMES AND OUTCOMES

Existing reviews tell us that there is much work to be done in order to be able to correlate the particular components of youth work programmes with particular outcomes. However, Dickson et al. (2013, p. 45) again suggest that a closer examination of the mainly North American literature on PYD could help here:

[It] could be possible to draw on qualitative data from case studies, cross-sectional studies and any views collected as part of surveys to answer the following question: *What are young people's views and perceptions on the impact of engaging in youth work activities?* Synthesis from the 54 process evaluations could also be conducted on: *the process of delivering youth work activities to understanding the mechanisms that may contribute to effectiveness; an exploration of the barriers and facilitators to participating in youth work activities. Any of the in-depth review topics suggested could be further narrowed to focus on specific types of youth work aims, activities and/or outcomes.*

To the extent that PYD and universal youth work are comparable practices, this would require the use of 'evidence synthesis methods' (p. 45) well beyond the resources of this review. However, they also suggest that there is increasing interest in addressing this question in the PYD literature and that advanced statistical techniques of comparing multiple variables is one way forward. (p. 39).

### 3.6.4 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

To the extent that it is seen by youth work advocates as a desirable exercise, more evidence is needed on 'what works' expressed in terms of cost-benefit analysis (Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012, p.225; Dickson et al. 2013, p.46).

### 3.6.5 OTHER RESEARCH GAPS

Dickson et al. (2013, p. 46) suggest that there are additional research gaps in the following areas:

- *Exploration of the fidelity to the youth work process*
- *Evaluations that consult with and/or include young people as research partners.*

## CONCLUSION

There is evidence to suggest that internationally (particularly in the U.S.) and across Europe youth work provision has positive outcomes in the following areas: developing skills and competencies; strengthening networks and social capital; changing behaviours perceived as 'risky' (Dunne et al. 2014, p. 138). Furthermore, the specific skills relate to: 'self-efficacy; resilience; communication skills; confidence and 'social' and 'interpersonal skills' (p. 138).

With respect to the outcomes of universal youth work specifically, practitioners might look to the US-based PYD tradition if they think that the comparison is reasonable. More specifically, Dunne et al (2014) focus on 'universal youth work' in Europe. What they can say on their assessment of the evidence in combination with primary research is that universal youth work can have positive outcomes in relation to (p. 158):

- Educational attainment
- Employability
- Health and well-being.

Whilst increased educational attainment also holds for the participation of so-called at-risk or socially excluded youth, there is a lack of evidence around the extent to which employability and health and wellbeing outcomes hold for 'risky' youth (p. 158).

Overall however, the picture painted is one of a great challenge in relation to the evidence base around outcomes. At a Europe-wide level, 'there is little evaluation data of youth work practice itself which hampers the identification of the outcomes and the contribution that youth work makes in the lives of young people' (Dunne et al. 2014, p. 176). In the UK and Ireland, there is a general dearth of 'specific investigations of youth work activities' (Dickson et al. 2013, p. 46).

# CHAPTER 4 REVIEW FINDINGS

## 4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the findings of the main literature review. It is structured around the main research questions and includes a number of summaries of key texts.

## 4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A total of 175 texts were analysed with a view to answering the following research questions:

1. What theories and concepts shape contemporary youth work (2004-present)?
2. What outcomes arise from what we understand as universal youth work provision (2004-present)?
3. Can we demonstrate the link between universal youth work and the national outcomes (2004-present)?

Of these 175 sources, 162 texts contributed to our response to question one above. A total of 75 sources citing empirical evidence were identified as being relevant for analysis with respect to research questions two and three above. It should be noted that the 75 empirical sources were also coded for theories and concepts and are included in the count of 162 sources helping us to answer the first research question. The following section sets out the findings in that regard.

## 4.2 WHAT THEORIES AND CONCEPTS SHAPE YOUTH WORK?

This section explores the theories and concepts shaping youth work. In doing so, it helps us to contextualise universal youth work, the outcomes agenda and the relationship between the two. Based on a process of inductive coding, three major thematic groupings emerged from the literature. These were:

- Difference and inequality
- Professionalisation
- Theories of learning and pedagogy

These themes emerged from a system of 'ground up' coding based on grouping clusters of related concepts together. Although this is an interpretive process and it is acknowledged that alternative readings may be possible, the systematic nature of the analysis provides a strong basis for confidence in these findings.

### 4.2.1 DIFFERENCE AND INEQUALITY

An overarching dilemma for youth work is how it can remain true to universalistic principles whilst addressing inequality and respecting difference. With respect to where 'universal youth work' fits in to this debate as a concept, Davies and Merton (2009, pp.8–9) make some subtle distinctions between universal youth work, generic youth work and open youth work; terms that are often used interchangeably:

*Universal provision we see as available to all potential users as a citizen's right, without financial or other qualifying tests. However, youth work has never had the statutory underpinning to ensure such non-selective availability. Moreover...even if universally*

available it is not necessarily 'open access' or 'open door' – the features which those using the term often seemed most anxious to highlight.

Generic provision embraces a range of inter-related, even integrated, facilities and opportunities...However, as entry may be restricted or filtered,...such provision does not guarantee the inclusive 'openness' which youth workers and their managers seemed to be advocating when using the term.

Open access is the term we therefore use as most accurately and positively capturing... young people's engagement...not dependent on their having a prior label attached (other than, of course, 'young person').

It could therefore be argued that universal youth work embraces a principle of ethical humanism. However, Williamson (2008) argues that youth policy has become embroiled in a 'mischievous' polarised debate between advocates of universal and targeted provision. In this debate, Williams claims that both 'sides' tend to obscure two important points: (1) the reality of practice is complex, with blends of these approaches frequently employed; (2) there is a gulf between rhetoric and reality in both approaches. Targeted approaches are often underpinned by a 'quasi-scientific' discourse that 'works hard at concealing confusion and uncertainties that are always an integral part of working with young people (p. 9). However, universal approaches in reality can never be all things to all people.

It seems that some authors conflate universalism with positive framings of youth and targeted provision with deficit framings (e.g. Young, in Banks 2010). This is overly simplistic and confuses different issues. In social justice terms, a more useful framing is perhaps to see this debate, as Fraser (1997) suggests, in terms of two dimensions:

- Social justice as redistribution
- Social justice as recognition

The former debate is about the allocation of scarce resources. If youth work is about addressing or ameliorating the effects of inequality then how best is this achieved with scarce resources? The second debate recognises injustice as occurring where particular identities and intersections of different identities are not recognised or are misrecognised within societies. Therefore, this broad strand of the literature, which we have called *addressing difference and inequality* includes debates on a diverse range of themes including:

- the role of faith in youth work (Roberts 2006; Hamid 2006; Belton & Hamid 2011; Stanton 2012; Mallon 2008; Belsterling 2006; Marsh 2006)
- gender (J Batsleer 2013; Graff 2013; Cullen 2013; Delaney 2009; Spence 2010)
- Race and ethnicity (Sallah 2011; Thomas 2007; Thomas & Henri 2011; Kivijärvi & Kivijarvi 2014; Travis 2007)
- legal status (Westoby & Ingamells 2007; Hudson 2014; Sinha & Uppal 2009)
- class (Coussee et al. 2009; Skott-Myhre 2005) , place (Batsleer 2012; Barton & Barton 2007; Davies 2012) and so on.

This literature is useful because it draws out attention towards the specific challenges of maintaining a commitment to universalism in particular places at particular times (e.g. ethnically diverse communities or 'post-conflict' societies such as Northern Ireland) (Harland 2009; McCully 2006), and how some supposedly 'open' forms of youth work merely reinforce gendered, raced or classed social norms (Sinha & Uppal 2009; Harinen et al. 2012; Kivijärvi & Kivijarvi 2014; C. Cooper 2012; Janet Batsleer 2013).

## 4.2.2 PROFESSIONALISATION

Overall, literature within this theme explored two driving questions: (1) is professionalisation desirable and why? (2) what does it mean to be and act as a professional? Unsurprisingly, a large volume of the literature is devoted to issues of professional identity or rather youth work being a profession in perpetual search for identity.

Prominent tensions emerge from these questions around the role of tacit knowledge, placed based knowledge, the cultural capital of the youth worker in effectively working through the complex scenarios of practice as opposed to good practice being regulated through managerialist regimes and competency frameworks that ensure minimum levels of knowledge and understanding. This can be crudely summarised by the tension between youth work as an art and a science. For example, Harris (2014) uses the metaphor of the youth worker as a 'jazz improviser'. Ross (2013) explores how youth workers move between 'personal knowledge' and 'professional knowledge' to negotiate complex practice dilemmas and others theorise the phenomenon of 'not knowing' as natural part of youth work practice that is marginalised by the managerialist 'myth of supercompetence' (Anderson-Nathe 2008).

A prominent strand of the literature emerges around professional practice interpreted as an ethical engagement, where different ways of understanding ethics are explored. This literature necessarily engages with philosophical thinking. For example, some youth work theorists argue from an Aristotelean 'virtue ethical' position (Bessant 2009), whilst others argue from a poststructuralist position which views ethics more as the capacity of the subject to challenge and disrupt power relations (Duffy 2013) and others still theorise ethics as a contextually sensitive relational engagement (Ahmed 2012). Different conceptualisations of ethics or not necessarily commensurable and open up wider questions about ethical practice, such as whether or not it can be defined in terms of 'good practice'. Whilst some commentators see an opposition between politics and ethics, others argue that the two concepts are inseparable (e.g. Banks 2014).

Literature on training needs and youth worker education belongs in this grouping. This conversation on professional education is usually conducted on the rationale that it is part and parcel of creating a more skilled and credible workforce equipped to advocate effectively for youth work's potential to achieve greater social justice (Judith Bessant 2009; Wylie 2010).

Also, theoretical and conceptual discussions on the relationship between youth work, activism and broader social movements belongs to this grouping (Shukra et al. 2012; Epstein 2013; Johnston-Goodstar & VeLure Roholt 2013; C. Cooper 2012; Fyfe 2013; Arches & Fleming 2007; Taylor 2013). Such discussions contend with the tensions between those who believe that starting from the needs of young people is in itself radical and those who would identify as being 'radicals who just happen to be youth workers' (Taylor 2013). Most significantly of all for the purposes of this report, conceptual debates over the outcomes agenda and attempts to theorise outcomes belong to this theme (Morgan 2009; Taylor 2010; Hansen & Crowdord 2011; Taylor & Taylor 2013). At one end of the spectrum of debate are youth workers from the In Defence of Youth Work campaign, who view the attempt of organisations such as the Young Foundation and the National Youth Agency to quantify 'soft outcomes' as irredeemable and question the credibility of the notion that youth work can 'own' outcomes and the desire for control that it supposedly expresses. On the other hand, there are those who argue that they do not seek to develop outcomes 'because of a love of measurement' but 'to understand how youth work makes its contribution so we can support the youth work profession and also to apply what we learn to other professions that intersect the lives of youth' (Hansen & Crowdord 2011, p.71). Whilst those defending an ostensibly radical youth work tradition see themselves as taking principled positions, they are branded as romantics by those who see themselves as 'principled pragmatists' (Wylie 2010).

The outcomes debate is thus intertwined with ongoing debates on managerialism and power.

Overwhelmingly, the most popular theoretical resource for understanding this in the youth work literature is through Foucault's theory of governmentality, which is used to understand the various technologies, techniques and mentalities necessary to govern young people as well as professional conduct (Ngai 2005; Davies & Merton 2010; Atkinson 2012; Coffey 2014; Smart 2007; Fitzsimons 2007).

### 4.2.3 THEORIES OF LEARNING AND PEDAGOGY

The final dominant thematic grouping is what I have called learning and pedagogy.

Overwhelmingly, youth work is viewed both in practice-based literature and in the academic literature as an educational and/or learning-based practice.

The youth work literature draws heavily on experiential learning theory (Ord 2009a; Ord 2012) of figures such as pragmatist philosopher John Dewey. Youth work is often portrayed as a process of informal or non-formal education and learning (Smart 2007; Cousee & Jeffs 2013; Batsleer 2008; Janet Batsleer 2013) characterised by voluntary and open processes that are intrinsically unpredictable and therefore not amenable to predetermined learning outcomes. Critics argue that this can be interpreted as meaning that anything goes. One consequence is that informal learning can act as a euphemism for indoctrination, either political or faith-based (Mallon 2008). In turn, this seemingly foundational principle of youth work has generated quite an active discussion on the notion of 'curriculum' in youth work: whether or not there is a place for it; whether it is best understood as product or process and so on (Ord 2004; Ord 2004; Ord 2009b; Barry 2005). This entire debate is particularly instructive in Scotland given the apparently widely accepted and rarely challenged relationship between youth work and the Curriculum for Excellence. Connected to all of this exists a burgeoning literature on the relationship between youth work and formal schooling and the role of youth work in schools (Corney 2006; Bradford & Byrne 2010; Coburn & Wallace 2011; J Batsleer 2013; Deuchar & Ellis 2013).

Studies of universal, open or generic youth work also frequently draw on various theories of critical pedagogy in a fruitful way. Whereas informal and experiential learning need not be normatively oriented, the critical pedagogy literature is expressly concerned with social justice, equality, intercultural learning and has been fruitfully employed to theorise both the shortcomings and the positive outcomes of being involved in universal provision (Cooper 2012; Riele & Riele 2010; Coburn 2011a; Atkinson 2012; Arches & Fleming 2007). Closely related to both the critical pedagogy literature and the outcomes literature is a growing literature on participatory action research (PAR), because it recognises that evaluation (like education and learning) is a political act and aims to empower young people with the skills to identify injustice and advocate and organise collectively to address it (Lisahunter et al. 2013; Dick 2009; Herman 2010; Flicker et al. 2008; Powers & Tiffany 2006).

A variety of other theories and concepts emerged from work on this question. Notwithstanding the three main groupings, PYD emerged as a popular theoretical approach despite not being included as a term in the search criteria. Whilst the PYD tradition does focus on learning, it does not have the same humanist and educative overtones as can be found elsewhere in Europe. To finish this section, it is pertinent to remember that whilst some advocate for a shared universal language, current linguistic differences are not merely semantic but reflect wider historical developments:

Social pedagogy has served as a core concept upon which much youth work is predicated in Germany and Scandinavia; whereas in England and Wales the concept of social pedagogy is barely acknowledged...Instead youth workers relate to the concepts of social and informal education in order to explain their practice to themselves and others. Likewise in Scotland youth workers usually describe themselves as community educators; whilst North Americans turn to the concept of youth development to account for their practice. Such variations...flow

from entrenched differences in the way in which youth work is approached and practitioners understand their place in the world...All this tells us that discrete histories relating to the development of youth work in specific locations are essential in order to foster meaningful dialogue across state and regional boundaries. Equally it suggests that overarching policies intended to standardise practice and the training of workers will have little meaningful impact, because youth work relates so closely to a given social context. The best that can be said is that whatever is called youth work will in most settings be based on voluntary affiliation on the part of the young person and will, as an educational relationship, be primarily based upon dialogical and experiential approaches (Cousee & Jeffs 2013, p.5).

On that final note, the following section moves on to examine empirical research pertinent to universal youth work practice and its outcomes.

### **4.3 WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE TELL US ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK PROVISION?**

The following sub-sections are organised geographically, starting with Scotland, moving outwards in scope to cover the rest of the UK, Europe and outside Europe. The sections are then further subdivided according to literature type. It should be kept in mind that studies on PYD are included if they were located through searches for 'youth work\*', but that the results do not come close to representing the insights from the much vaster literature on PYD. In any case, this has been aptly covered by other reviews.

#### **4.3.1 STUDIES OF YOUTH WORK IN SCOTLAND PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

One article entitled Young people's leisure contexts and their relation to adult outcomes (Feinstein et al. 2006) stands out for several reasons. First, it is the only substantial study using quantitative methods. Second, it makes a specific claim in respect of methodological robustness. The Young Foundation (Moullin et al. 2011, p.7) appeared to rank this publication as being the most robust UK-based study. Third, its controversial reputation amongst youth workers and policy analysts, based at least in part on selective presentation of its findings by politicians. This paper was based on an analysis of data from the 1970 British Birth Cohort Study and thus includes (but is not limited to) Scotland. It used data from age 16 and data from age 30 in order to investigate the relationship between young people's leisure contexts and social exclusion based on a range of different indicators at age 30. The researchers used logistic regression modelling to analyse the extent to which participation in various 'leisure activities' at age 16 predicted social exclusion at age 30.

The researchers found that participation in a generic 'youth club' setting increased the tendency towards exclusion based on various social exclusion outcomes 'including lack of qualifications, unemployment, smoking, drinking, and crime' (p. 305). On the other hand, the researchers found that '[o]ther settings such as sports clubs and church clubs showed no associations of this kind or associations in the opposite direction' (p. 305). As the NYA (2014, p. 2) has argued, sports-club participation can be considered youth work if 'the primary focus is the social and emotional development of the young person' as opposed to the instrumental mastery of a sport. Since it was the intention of this review to consider uniformed youth work, faith-based provision, sports-based activities and so on under the rubric of universal youth work, some splitting is necessary here.

'Youth club' attendance was found to 'strongly predict' poor educational outcomes, whilst 'church clubs', 'sports centres' and to a lesser extent uniformed youth organisations predicted good educational outcomes (Feinstein et al. 2006, p.315). Even when accounting for various controls at age 16, this relationship remained statistically significant (p. 318). Also, after accounting for age 16 control variables, involvement with sports centres 'continued to predict reduced likelihood of depression, being single, divorced or separated, living in temporary or social housing

and experience of homelessness' (p. 320). Moreover, youth club participation still strongly predicted criminal activity, not voting and low income (p. 320). Overall, the researchers conclude that even taking into account various controls, sports clubs and church clubs showed a negative association with social exclusion outcomes whilst youth clubs showed a positive association with social exclusion outcomes.

How to interpret this? The researchers add the absolutely crucial caveat that these results 'can only be fully understood in terms of the context of young people's lives that preceded participation' (p. 321). The researchers concede that regardless of their controls, 'selection bias' is at work and that the negative social outcomes of youth club attendance and positive social outcomes of sports, church and uniformed based participation may owe to wider structural factors related to class rather than participation in the clubs themselves. What they regard as of more significance is the lack of evidence that youth club participation did anything to ameliorate social exclusion risk for the most vulnerable (p.321).

As researchers Davis and Merton (2009, p.6) remark, such 'complex findings' were subjected to 'simplistic interpretations' by British Children's Ministers, leading to assertions that unstructured youth clubs are harmful and providing justification for the Westminster policy shift towards structured positive activities, which marginalised the informal education mandate of youth work. Although this is not the Scottish policy context, one could argue that even if youth workers primarily identify as informal educators for social justice and advocates of young people, an important component of the professional training needs of youth and community workers in Scotland should involve a broad understanding of social research methods and how they relate to social theory. In this way, youth workers can advocate more effectively by directly addressing suspect policy assertions through an understanding of what any given expert academic study can and cannot reasonably claim in order to challenge suspect policy assertions.

The remaining three academic journals report results from two different qualitative studies. Two articles (Coburn & Wallace 2011; Coburn 2011b) draw on data from the same ethnographic case study of an undisclosed 'generic youth work setting' in Scotland. Both articles directly address learning about equality, and the development of social and cultural capital as outcomes of participation in an 'open setting' (as opposed to a closed, targeted setting) from the young peoples' perspective (Coburn 2011a, p.479).

The case study drew on researcher observation over a period of three years as well as in-depth interviews with young people. A total of 62 young people were involved in the research, 17 of whom participated in in-depth one-to-one interviews. These 17 young people were identified as being 'white', with eight females and seven males all aged between 16-19 at the beginning of the research process. Based on the perceptions of young people themselves and the researcher's own observations, Coburn concludes that it was precisely the open nature of the so-called 'generic setting' that provided opportunities for young people to encounter different intersecting ethnic, faith, gender, sexual, and class-based identities and thereby interrogate their own values and beliefs (Coburn 2011a, p.488). This process was described in transformative terms by some participants and led to the development over time of 'cultural and social capital'. The two articles (Coburn & Wallace 2011; Coburn 2011b) provide powerful accounts of the potential of universal youth work to facilitate intercultural learning.

Testimony from the young people, coupled with researcher observation revealed some key factors for success. Firstly, sustained engagement over time. Secondly, the voluntary nature of engagement. Thirdly, a commitment to power sharing between adults and young people and the collective negotiation of a curriculum. Finally, clear structured opportunities and pathways for participation that were responsive to the developmental needs of young people. For example young working class people were given the opportunity to develop volunteering skills or participate in cultural youth exchanges that allowed them to cross borders in a very literal as well as a metaphorical sense. In this sense, having the resources for physical mobility can be seen as a success factor. Although there are many, this element of voluntary participation alongside



structured activities is illustrated with two choice quotes below:

I was on the youth exchange, I learned a lot about other cultures and a wee bit about other languages [...] Everything I've learned or done up here its because I've wanted to do it ... not because I've been told to do it ... that's what respect and equality is about (Ryan) (Coburn 2011a, p.486).

[W]hen I first came up, I thought it would be one of these youth places, where people come and play games, do things and that would be it ... I never thought you could get involved in so many ways ... I met a lot of people, even the youth workers...its changed me...Ryan, aged 17' (Coburn & Wallace 2011, p.68).

The final academic journal article is based on a evaluative case study based on an ethnographic study of three school and youth work partnerships in Glasgow spanning 30 weeks during the 2010-11 academic year (Deuchar & Ellis 2013). The programme was aimed at '35 young people, who were aged 11-12, of mixed gender and all of white ethnic backgrounds' who had a history or were on the 'periphery' of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and gang activity (p. 100). In this sense, the intervention was targeted and it is unclear to what extent participation in the intervention was voluntary. In this sense, it is not directly relevant to universal youth work, but because it focuses directly on interventions sharing at least some principles of youth work as defined in chapter one of this report; is focused on a Scottish context; and directly addresses outcomes from participation, a decision was made to include it.

The researchers interviewed the young people at the beginning of the process and then conducted follow-up interviews months after the process in order to identify critical learning incidents and subjectively explore the project's impact on the young people from their perspectives (p. 104). Through workshops based on the youth work principles of dialogical, participatory 'active learning', young people explored controversial social issues within their own communities that directly or indirectly affected the young people. As the researchers argued, given the social strains that many of the participants faced:

...one would hope that the one place that the young people might experience a safe, encouraging and welcoming refuge would be in school. However,...the young people we interviewed mostly viewed school as an authoritarian, controlling institution characterised by didactic approaches to teaching and learning and an ethos that undermined their sense of dignity and respect (p. 109-10).

The researchers describe the success in using participatory youth work approaches in terms of the self-professed transformative effect it had on some young people as well as integration back into school as well as decreased ASB. They summarise (p. 110):

The young people viewed their relationships with youth workers as extremely positive and encouraging, and talked widely about experiencing empathy, respect, encouragement, equality and shared understandings...Accordingly, by the end of the programme many of the young people's self-reported perceptions about, and responses to, the social pressures and strains they experienced were beginning to change. Many of their responses in interviews indicated that they were becoming more committed to desisting from ASB in school and, in some cases, the wider community...Social bonds between pupils and youth workers emerged, and pupils indicated that they felt more able to deal with confrontational situations that arose in schools.

The youth work approach through helping the participants to develop a critical understanding of the social dynamics influencing their personal situations was deemed to generate successful outcomes in terms of increased self-control, confidence and self-esteem, as well as managing personal and social relationships. It should also be mentioned that a cited success factor was a prolonged and sustained engagement with the youth workers. However the researchers could not infer anything about the longevity of these positive effects.

## DOCTORAL THESES

In total, four doctoral theses about Scottish youth work were located. However, only one addressed outcomes. This thesis was an ethnographic case study of a partnership of voluntary youth work organisations called the Stoneleigh Group, carried out between 2000-04 (Loynes 2008). The Stoneleigh project was based on the principles of informal and experiential learning in outdoor settings aimed at the 'spiritual development' of young people aged between 18-25. The programme trained participants to become volunteer youth workers and one of its main aims was to help young people 'become agents of social change in their communities' (p. 1). A primary focus of the research was a critical exploration of the project's 'impact on the lives of the young people' (p. 1). This was investigated through participant observation as well as focus groups and in-depth interviews with young people.

The researcher investigated the extent to which outdoor youth work retreats in the Scottish Western Isles fostered the development of young people from urban settings as agents of social change. The research focused particularly on the experiences and change over time of ten participants of various backgrounds, chosen purposefully to represent the diversity of the programme participants (p. 240). The author found that the project was most successful in fostering personal development outcomes such as enhanced personal awareness and 'a sense of power and agency in their lives concerning how they were understood both by themselves and by others.' (p. 279). Social capital outcomes were observed as participants developed new social networks, but significantly, learnt new skills for relating to existing social networks that was experienced by some young people as transformative (p. 280). The author argues that the intended outcome of young people becoming agents of social change was less successful. However, out of 65 participants the author found that 'at least 15 young people took on responsibility for projects addressing social issues such as drug use and truancy. At least nine... became professional youth workers by the time the research was concluded' (p. 318).

The researcher sites adults and young people as partners in the learning process, voluntary participation and a negotiated experiential curriculum as being success factors. Significantly, another success factor cited was the remote spatial setting:

*Separation, I have argued, was important...In this case it can be understood as the removal of the social and spatial references defining the young people in their everyday worlds that were considered to initiate the exploration of new possibilities for an adult identity (p. 278).*

This resonates with Coburn's (2011a; 2011b) findings above that intercultural learning was not about mobility and border crossing in a purely metaphorical sense. It was contingent on the material movement of young people across geographical boundaries and places that defined their lived experience.

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS BY YOUTH WORK ORGANISATIONS AND STATUTORY BODIES

The report *Improving Scottish Education* (HMIE 2009, p.70) reports that 'evidence from questionnaires to participants in CLD activities across 16 local authorities demonstrates that almost all think that their experiences have contributed to their developing the capacities of Curriculum for Excellence'. In addition, 'almost all young people who responded also indicate that they have become more involved in their community' and a majority feel safer in their communities and healthier as a result of being involved in youth work. This evidence, however, appears to be based on self-assessment at one point in time. No other primarily quantitative studies were located.

The *Duke of Edinburgh Award* (DofE) commissioned the University of Northampton to undertake an analysis of the outcomes of DofE for young people across the UK (Pears Foundation 2010). The findings presented are UK-wide and include Scotland but are not specific to Scotland. The research was conducted between 2007-09. A rich array of both qualitative and quantitative

data was obtained via an online survey of young people tracking changes in attitudes over time (N=1848), interviews, focus groups and 25 oral history interviews with Gold Award holders over the past 50 years (p. 3). Through a synthesis of this evidence, overwhelmingly positive outcomes were presented across the following broad themes (pp. 4-5):

- Developing positive attitudes towards new experiences
- Building resilience and self-esteem with those with the 'lowest starting points...most likely to benefit from participation'
- Community engagement Physical and mental wellbeing
- Employment skills and prospects.

*YouthLink Scotland* and *NHS Scotland* (McVey n.d.) produced a briefing on *The positive impact of youth work on the mental health and well-being of young people from BME backgrounds*. Although there is no publication date it is clear that this research was carried out between 2004-08. The research takes a case study approach. The research involved site visits, discussions with staff as well as a seminar and a focus group with BME youth workers. So-called good practice examples are presented from four youth work projects combining targeted work with open youth work provision. However, the good practice in question is more of a descriptive account of projects rather than any kind of qualitative or quantitative evidence of impact in this area. Impact notwithstanding, the research raises 'challenges and solutions' which are very pertinent for universal youth work. Reflections on practice highlight the need to consider potential distance between the cultural values and norms of parents and guardians of BME young people and those of 'Western' youth work traditions, as well as being culturally sensitive to the approach of issue-based work (p. 23). It is suggested that in order for BME young people to gain positive outcomes with regard to mental health and wellbeing through youth work, a number of factors around access should be carefully considered. These include time and place of provision, providing language support and perhaps above all taking a holistic approach involving community leaders, parents and guardians (p. 23).

Youth Borders—the umbrella organisation for youth work in the Scottish borders—has produced and published online a series of annual evaluation reports on the outcomes of youth work across various 'generic youth work' settings (Ashrowan 2010; Ashrowan & Liddell 2011; Ashrowan 2013). These evaluations take a case study approach using small vignettes of practice and quotations from young people to demonstrate outcomes. A plethora of vignettes, case study exemplars and quotes from young people are used in each evaluation. Due to the breadth of the qualitative evidence gathered the accounts are anecdotal. A weakness is that they lack the rigour required by those who argue that youth work should be delivered and evaluated as a scientific enterprise (e.g. Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012), whilst lacking the 'thickness' of in-depth ethnographic accounts such as those above, that provide insights into the relationship between theory/practice or process/outcome (albeit at a non-generalisable level).

#### 4.3.2 STUDIES OF YOUTH WORK IN THE REST OF THE UK PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Feinstein et al's (2006) Young people's leisure contexts and their relation to adult outcomes notwithstanding, discussed above, no other purely quantitative studies were located. The only mixed methods study identified was a recent evaluative case study of detached youth work in Yorkshire funded by the Youth Sector Development Fund (Jones 2014). The article itself—entitled 'Counting people is not youth work' after a quote from one of the youth workers—explored the perceived tensions 'between the traditional youth work values of voluntary engagement, informal education and association and the demand for quick results linked to a particular short-term funding stream' (p. 220). The quantitative data was summative data regarding attendance obtained from workers throughout the project's lifecourse. The researcher then conducted semi-structured interviews with youth workers as well as semi-structured interviews and focus groups with

young people (p. 226).

Youth workers recorded the number of young people engaged and the number of engagements using digital devices. The workers gathered evidence of 'soft outcomes' for case study material using recordings, written material and photographs. The youth workers grouped soft outcomes into four key areas: 'work skills, attitudinal skills, personal skills and practical skills' (p. 227). The two detached teams engaged very high numbers of young people (2198 in one area on 2247 in another) and the author states that 'If success is measured by quantitative measures and soft outcomes, by decreased rates of ASB in localities where TYA's detached workers were based and by young people's professed enjoyment, the work was successful' (p. 227-8).

However, the researcher revealed that some youth workers felt as though the pressure to record engagements reduced the ability to do sustained quality work and build relationships. One might suggest that the tension is between being an informal educator and an agent of surveillance. The study also reveals that young people gained cultural and social capital but only through purposeful activities organised by workers to overcome territoriality by having the resources to physically travel with different groups of young people from their locales to spaces where intercultural learning could take place, for example a Love Music Hate Racism festival (p. 231). As with the Scottish studies, this arguably demonstrates the potential of universal approaches. Similar to the Scottish studies, success factors involved sustained engagement over time to build relationships as well as paying attention to the importance of place and mobility. However, the researcher notes that such engagement is threatened by short termism and terminological changes related to evaluation as youth policy is treated as a political football by successive governments.

The remaining studies in this category report 'pure' qualitative research. Working back from the most recently published studies, Nolas (2014) draws on ethnographic field work of an open youth work setting in England carried out between 2004-2006. Nolas studied what the young people themselves got out of involvement in open youth work and their future aspirations. The young people involved were aged between 13-18. Interestingly, she employed a participatory action research (PAR) approach for data collection: six young people were trained in 'participatory video' and interviewing, and then interviewed a further 15 young people over a period of nine months (p. 29). The young researchers then participated in reflective focus groups in order to interpret the footage. In addition to this, the researcher interviewed youth workers, analysed documents and 120 newspaper articles on the project and also collected field notes.

Based on her findings, Nolas discusses the tensions between PYD and older, more established practices of youth work. The young people involved participated not because they were bored and seeking 'structured activities', but because it provided a safe and non-judgemental space to escape the tensions and divisions they experienced in everyday life (p. 38). Moreover, it provided a 'liminal' space where they could explore their own identities and biographies through 'hanging out' and building relationships with other young people and youth workers (p. 38).

Based on the available evidence, Nolas suggests that if the above can be considered outcomes (in terms of providing a safe space for personal and social development) then the primary success factor for creating a 'culture of participation' was 'time for authentic relationships to flourish and for a common language to develop between young people and youth workers alike' (p. 37). Nolas challenges the new orthodoxy of PYD, positive and structured activities by arguing that they merely set up dichotomies between positive/negative activities, structured/unstructured activities and pro- and anti-social norms, which betray far more complex realities and may only succeed in reproducing the deficit framings of young people that they aim to avoid.

Dickens and Lonie (2013, p.59) present an in-depth case study of 'a community music project called Ustudios, which drew on peer-mentoring practices to develop and record rap lyrics with local young people' in Brighton. The research took place between 2011-12 and as well as researcher observation, involved face-to-face, group and telephone interviews with the specialist who ran the workshops and eight young participants experiencing 'challenging circumstances'

(p. 63). The Hip Hop workshops were part of the Hangleton and Knoll Project, which takes a 'youth work' approach stressing voluntary engagement and the development of young people's critical faculties to gain increased confidence and take control of their lives (p. 63). Through a progression from writing and recording songs to delivering peer-led workshops themselves several positive outcomes were achieved. These were increased self-confidence and self-esteem as well as becoming active responsible citizens in their own communities. A number of key success factors were identified: (1) starting where the young people were 'at'. This occurred by taking seriously Hip Hop as the young people's preferred form of expression through which to reflect on challenging life circumstances and develop the skills to express these narratives and empathise with other stories (p. 69); (2) the activity was not viewed as instrumental and the young people valued that fact that the project leader's specific skill set as a Hip Hop artist interested in making music first and not as the means to achieve other outcomes (p. 63); finally, in-keeping with the pattern from qualitative case studies so far, the period of prolonged and stable engagement with the same young people 'through a critical stage in their development' from their early teens and into their twenties was essential (p. 63).

The other relevant article published in 2013 was a qualitative study of youth worker's experiences of using a specific methodology to evaluate the outcomes of youth work for young people (S. S. Cooper 2012). Cooper details a participatory action research (PAR) method called the 'Most Significant Change method', which involves young people and youth workers generating and then collectively analysing young peoples' narratives about significant changes that they experienced. This study is potentially useful because it demonstrates that evaluation is political and the building of strong relationships between youth workers and young people and the young peoples' development of research skills in the process demonstrates how difficult it is to separate means from ends in universal youth work.

Cooper (2012) explored the possibilities of doing 'radical youth work' drawing on critical pedagogy theory in her in-depth case study based on participant observation in 2010 whilst working at 'an open-access youth club in a deprived inner-city district of an English city'. The author details her struggle and ultimately lack of success in taking a critical problem posing approach. She draws two very pertinent conclusions for universal youth work: (1) the drive to work to 'predetermined targets and outcomes' addressing NEET and ASB issues 'is closing off opportunities for progressive ways of working with young people' (p. 66); (2) not doing work which challenges and problematises various inequalities left the underlying assumptions behind gender and ethnic divisions within this so-called 'open setting' unchecked. In fact, the author details how workers implicitly organised 'activities tailored to fit certain stereotypes of gender' (p. 60).

Thomas and Henri's (2011) case study of youth work in Oldham addresses the potential of 'community cohesion' as an alternative framework to 'anti-racism' in order to foster intercultural learning and address racism in youth work. The study, based on in-depth interviews with youth workers, presents evidence that in spite of criticism by social policy academics, 'community cohesion' has generated positive outcomes. The authors argue that anti-racism work had often been experienced as rigid and non-negotiable by white young people expressing racist views who nevertheless faced their own class-based prejudices. Instead, the authors present evidence that 'on the ground' the community cohesion work has been based on 'shared experiences, experiential education and laying the grounds for the possible recognition of commonality across ethnic backgrounds' (p. 87). Crucially, the same success factors appear in this project: (1) sustained contact over time (p. 86); (2) informal yet structured opportunities for intercultural contact and team work that recognise the importance of place and mobility and also break down intra-ethnic territorial boundaries (p. 85).

Davies (2011) going 'in search of qualitative evidence' presents in-depth narratives from youth workers and young people related to the processes and outcomes of youth work. These narratives were collated by the In Defence of Youth Work campaign and were intended to illustrate the complexities, contingencies and risks associated with 'open youth work' (p. 23) in order to 'counter the simplistic number crunching and 'tick boxing' which has dominated youth work in

recent years' (p. 24). These narratives are one mode of advocating for youth work. This is valuable to the extent that effective advocacy must consider what kinds of knowing and what ways of framing outcomes will be effective at different times, with different purposes in mind and to different audiences (Judith Bessant 2009). Although they are unlikely to convince positivist social researchers (Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012), the narratives provide powerful insights into dynamic processes with no guarantees. In these narratives, the hard won development of authentic relationships with young people over prolonged periods, tacit and place based knowledge of workers (or youth worker 'cultural capital'), and flexible yet structured activities and a kind of controlled creativity are highlighted as success factors. Yet, they are precisely the kinds of process that come with no guarantees. Many of the stories emphasise the tensions between young people owning outcomes themselves and attributing them to youth workers.

Yates et al. (2009) present a qualitative case study of the New Cross Hospital Youth Work team, drawing on researcher observation and interviews with youth workers, hospital staff and young people. It is included here as it details how the youth work approach premised on voluntary engagement, informal learning and power sharing between young people and adults can have positive health impacts for young people by keeping them connected to essential health care services. The authors write that based on the limited evidence to-date, youth work in partnership with health care professionals is 'effective in improving relationships, communications and the consent process between young people and hospital staff, increasing levels of self-care and adherence to treatment regimens, and intervening with underlying background issues that affect young people's general and medical well-being' (p. 90).

Interestingly, Sinha and Uppal (2009) in their cross-sectional study called Particular Universalisms empirically study the exclusion of migrant young people in East London from so-called 'universal' youth services. They interviewed 16 migrants, male and female between 15-23 years of age identified through professional contacts in the child and youth care sector. Their findings are pertinent because they argue that despite rhetorically 'Universalistic policy' such as Sure Start and Every Child Matters, young migrants are often subject to immigration, welfare and health-care legislation and procedure that positions them as 'lesser youth' and leaves them socially isolated and unable to access health care and joined-up provision such as that touched upon above.

Percy-Smith (2007) gives an account of a community-based participatory action research (PAR) with young people that reinforces the potential of youth work approaches to improving young people's health and wellbeing. Eleven BME young people between 14-19 (two males and nine females) based in London undertook 'peer research' in order to discuss and identify health issues affecting young people. These peer researchers then presented their findings at a larger scale event with 63 young people (aged 13-21) and 36 professionals from the education, health care and youth work sectors (p. 881). Following from this, young people and professionals engaged in a 'knowledge café' where they acted as partners in informal yet structured 'social learning' processes. Outcomes involved the 'professionals' learning that issues to do with mental health and wellbeing and specifically stress related to various social pressures, were bigger concerns for young people than they had realised. The findings supported the potential role that open youth work could play in the health and wellbeing of young people, based on voluntary engagement that are 'rooted in everyday contexts, relationships and environments' of young people (p. 889).

Pope (2007) presents a case study of cultural youth work in Liverpool, drawing on observations and interviews with youth workers and at 'at-risk' young people of both genders aged between 13-16. Young people and youth workers used Liverpool's 'City of Culture' status as a platform to explore the city through a mix of cultural excursions and group activities led by young people that validated their own forms of cultural expression (for example, social relationships through the 'art of txt communication culture'). The researcher draws on qualitative evidence from young people to suggest a number of positive outcomes including cross-cultural learning, cultural awareness, social skills, skills in negotiation and the arts and increased confidence and self-esteem. Again, the culturally open nature of the work and the important role of mobility and movement across the city seems to be a consistent finding that holds promise for universal youth work.

Arches and Fleming (2007) report the results of oral history research addressing the impact of a 'social action project' in Nottingham on adults who participated as young people in the late 1970s. The project was led by young people through their own voluntary participation and it resulted in them successfully advocating for, and setting up, a community youth club, before it sadly burnt down. The youth workers involved at the time drew on critical pedagogy theory (particularly that of Paulo Freire) and were concerned with collective learning in order to equip marginalised young people with the skills to self-advocate and effectively challenge the status-quo, rather than individual outcomes (p. 36). Nevertheless, speaking 25 years on, participants gave powerful testimonies of lasting transformative impacts. They gained 'self-control, self-discipline, teamwork, group work, conflict resolution, problem solving skills, communication skills and advocacy skills and knowledge that many of them claimed to still use in different areas of their lives twenty years on (p. 43). Crucially, these outcomes were collectively developed and they 'did not attribute their success to an understanding or charismatic youth worker or services that were provided' (p. 43). This finding supports the argument presented that youth workers and youth work organisations cannot claim to 'own' the positive outcomes of young people.

## DOCTORAL THESES

Mason (2013) gives an in-depth ethnographic account of universal youth work in a Northern city of England. However, the thesis investigates the experiences of predominantly Somali young people aged 11-19 and youth workers that work alongside with them. It is relevant to this study because it directly addresses the tension and dilemmas that youth workers face between 'universal youth provision and ideological religious differences' (p. 89). The thesis provides fascinating 'thick' description of the dynamics of these tensions as the author drawing on the rich testimony of youth workers of various ethnicities and faiths claims that 'some of the more traditionally Muslim families were openly unsupportive of 'universal' youth provision in general, preferring religiously specific youth services' (p. 92). Some youth workers were of the opinion that at the heart of the issue was a related tension between youth-led cultural activities and the more ostensibly conservative cultural outlooks of their parents. This led to a quite serious break down of community trust as local authorities nervous of cultural sensitivities withdrew funding and the Somali community became divided between those who supported and those who opposed universal provision (p. 90). One youth worker observed that there seemed to be pressure on many 'second generation' Somali young people to achieve academically and opined that:

*...particular groups (youth provision sessions) become identified as being associated with particular ethnic groups. So the Homework Club, even though it isn't a Somali homework club, is seen as a Somali homework club.*

It seems that such in-depth qualitative can provide valuable insights into local cultural dynamics and their historical makings that at the very least demonstrates the need to find ways to work across generational as well as ethnic boundaries if the concept of universal youth work is to have any traction in multicultural communities. Also, the notion that youth workers' education should focus on the skills and theory of advocacy (Judith Bessant 2009) as well as a renewed concentration on the role of language and how 'youth problems' are framed. This can take different forms in different subjects. For example in a subject area such as 'Youth Policy' it may include analysing the 'problem setting' activities of the media and other policy makers. In history based subjects, it can entail a study of public and 'respectable fears' and how they are connected to the ways young people have been regularly described as 'hooligans' and trouble-makers, thus warranting 'special' treatment. Some of the central elements of a stand-alone youth advocacy or social action subject are also detailed in this article. Adapted from the source document. The geography of young people: the morally contested spaces of identity. The geography of young people: the morally contested spaces of identity (2001 becomes increasingly relevant in this situation, where no one should assume that 'traditional' youth work values are understood, let alone valued.

Wood's (2009) cross-sectional study addresses young people's own understanding of active

citizenship. The researcher conducted several in-depth focus groups with young people, including those who participate in youth work provision. This kind of work is notable because so few studies devote themselves to investigating young people's own understandings of the discourses around which outcomes are framed in policy. The researcher finds that some of the participants undertake many acts of mundane 'active citizenship' in day-to-day life that may not be recognised as such.

## **RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS BY YOUTH WORK ORGANISATIONS AND STATUTORY BODIES**

Research on the impact of participating in the DoFE Award is not included as it was discussed above. Starting from the most recent, the *National Youth Agency* published a report of the role of youth work in formal education (NYA 2013), The *Young Foundation* published a guide in 2011 whose aim was to provide tools for measuring outcomes and to help organisations choose the most appropriate ones (Moullin et al. 2011) and the *National Youth Agency*, working in partnership, published an outcomes 'calculator' (no-date) related to this work. The NYA argues that in order for youth work to work effectively with schools and to overcome professional and ideological divides between youth workers and teachers (Deuchar & Ellis 2013; Bradford & Byrne 2010), youth workers must be able to demonstrate its outcomes to Ofsted. Although they do not address substantive outcomes from specific interventions, the reason that these sources are mentioned here is that they are the result of empirical research (piloting the 'calculators') to develop methods for assessing outcomes in youth work.

Merton et al. (2004) produced a report for the Department for Education and Skills on the *Impact of youth work in England*. The fieldwork was undertaken between 2003-04. The researchers investigated 'how youth work contributes in different ways to the personal and social development of young people and their communities' and 'the different factors that mediate this contribution' (p. 18). The design was wide-ranging and included the following data collection methods: document review; review of numerical data from the National Youth Agency's national audit; interviews and testimony from 880 young people and youth work professional across 15 local services; 30 case studies of practice; a non-representative survey of 660 young people using youth work services. Researchers found evidence that egalitarian relationships between youth workers and young people gave young people a feeling of respect and recognition that led to increased confidence and motivation to achieve in employment, education and training (p. 45-6). Survey results showed that between 60 and 70% of respondents agreed that participation in youth work increased their 'interpersonal skills', 'self-confidence' and 'ability to make decisions for themselves and take control' (p. 47). In relation to developing 'bridging social capital' 58% of survey respondents recorded that 'youth work had enabled them better to understand people who are different from themselves' (p. 49). The researchers recognise the limits of the methods and the difficulty of inferring causal links between outcomes and youth work practice (p. 49).

### **4.3.3 STUDIES OF YOUTH WORK IN REST OF EUROPE PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES**

#### **STUDIES WERE DRAWN FROM:**

Belgium  
Bosnia-Herzegovina  
Cyprus  
Estonia  
Finland  
Germany  
Italy  
Norway  
Sweden

Two relevant quantitative studies were identified in 2014, one in 2010 and one in 2007. Yucel and Ekici (2014) perform secondary analysis from the most recent wave of data in the European Values Survey. Using statistical regression, the researchers found that participation in voluntary organisations, including youth work organisations, was one of the most statistically significant factors correlating with 'generalised trust' amongst Turkish Cypriots. More directly relevant was a study by Morciano et al. (2014) into the impacts of a publicly funded network of 157 new youth work centres in Southern Italy called 'urban labs'. One of the main



aims of the project was to fund the youth work centres for a limited period of time, with the intention of building the capacity of the young people themselves to fund and manage the centres as Third Sector organisations. Thus, one of the principal goals was to develop young social entrepreneurs. The researchers administered an online questionnaire to young people taking a leading role in the management of the centres and they created various scales in order to measure 'deliberative quality of participation', 'collective self-efficacy' (meaning that 'leaders' answered questions about the efficacy of 'their' team as a whole) and 'empowerment' (p. 88). The researchers concluded that participatory planning led to empowerment and that 'self-efficacy in networking and cooperation skills was associated with the high deliberative quality of the participation experience' (p. 97).

Taru (2010) studied the positive impact of youth work on young people in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. An online survey was completed by young people in school in 2010. The population consisted of all '5th, 8th and 11th grade students' in the city (aged between 11-18 years) and a cluster sampling procedure was used, generating a final sample of 1, 061 young people. Taru explored the relationship between participation in different forms of youth work ('open' youth work centres, hobby education, youth projects, youth organisations and counselling) and the following outcome variables: 'labour market orientation, multiculturalism and voting' (p. 87). The researcher concluded that participation in all types of youth work were positively associated with indicators regarding intentions to vote, multicultural attitudes and career planning. However, these relationships, whilst consistent were mostly not statistically significant (p. 94). Moreover, the researcher acknowledged that lack of pre-and post-testing meant that the 'pattern of relationships could equally well reflect the selection effects of youth work.'

Lastly, Wang (2007) explored the role of internet use for intercultural dialogue and outlined implications for youth work with 'migrant youth' in Germany. The research was based on data gleaned through a survey of 300 Turkish migrant young people. The researcher found evidence to support the claim that young migrants disproportionately lack the recognition and capabilities to make use of the internet to build social and cultural capital. The researcher contends that German youth workers must pay closer attention to digital divides amongst young people they work with (p. 158).

Harinen et al. (2012) use qualitative interviews (N=39) and a nation-wide survey of 'multicultural young people' aged 13-24 (N=1024) to explore the tension between the rhetoric and reality of multicultural youth work in Finland. They ask 'is the universalistic principle of 'open doors' enough, or is there a need for a more intensive approach to multiculturalism, even positive discrimination?' (p. 188). Respondents perceived that access to nominally open youth club spaces was blocked by the tacit prejudices of both workers and other young people. The researchers report that:

Multicultural young people have an urgent need to discuss racism, even though the concept has been flushed out of the formal discourses and strategies of youth work. Furthermore, there is a gap between the activities offered and multicultural young people's wishes: they want daily, creative and even ideological activities, but what they are mostly offered are camps, trips and open clubs. Sports, however, is one leisure arena where multicultural youth often feel welcome and multicultural coexistence can emerge (p. 188).

Kotilainen (2009) studies the role of media literacy as a component of 'responsible citizenship', which youth work should aspire to. The research is based on a case study of a youth media project. The researcher used surveys, researcher observation and document analysis as part of a wider PAR research project with young people to develop such skills. Evidence from the project indicated that it was the recognisable components of a youth work approach, which were factors for success in developing media literacy: collective learning; adults and young people as partners in the learning process; themes emerging from young people themselves (p. 255).

Forkyby and Kiilakoski (2014) present a comparative analysis of youth work in Finland and Sweden. This study is of note because it generates insights into the challenges faced by universal youth work in these countries. The authors state that the 'Nordic welfare system relies primarily

on offering universal services' and that this idea has been 'internalised in the occupation of youth work' (p. 8). Moreover, youth workers in both countries 'emphasise the open nature of clubs and do not wish to see hindrances placed on entrance' (p. 8). However, the researchers present evidence that young people are concerned about the 'cultural control' of open youth work spaces that reinforce patriarchal gender norms and become closed off to migrant youth (p. 9). Finally, the authors rightly point out that more research into participants' experiences and perceptions is needed because much research to-date in these countries is based on the experiences and perceptions of youth workers, with the consequence that findings might simply 'reflect an ideal type of professional image' (p. 13).

Vasbø (2013) presents evidence on intercultural learning through an ethnographic case study of participants in a Norwegian youth club becoming involved in an international youth exchange with youth work participants in Brazil. Data was collected over the course of a year, through researcher observation and in-depth interviews tracking the participation of three males and three females participating in the exchange. This research found that the exchange provided space for non-formal learning that expanded social networks and equipped participants with 'social, communicative and cultural knowledge and skills related to learning to live together in a multicultural and complex world' (p. 90). Again this suggests the important role of place and mobility in developing such outcomes.

Haudenhuyse et al. (2012) present an ethnographic case study of a boxing club taking a distinctively youth work approach, premised on voluntary engagement, egalitarian relationships between coaches, youth workers and young people and attention to the lived experience of young participants. The authors' data collection involved interviews with the aforementioned groups. One of the primary aims of the club was to provide a safe and nurturing space for potentially 'vulnerable youth' as well as developing technical boxing skills. Interestingly, reflecting on their data, the authors criticise the dichotomy between pro-social and anti-social behaviour that PYD theory is premised upon. Instead, they argued that the gym's effectiveness was predicated on focusing on 'young people's concrete needs and life situations' (p. 449). This, they reason, means paying more attention to lived experience and less on outcomes derived from abstract ideas about positive youth development (p. 450).

#### 4.3.4 STUDIES OF YOUTH WORK OUTSIDE EUROPE PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Luk et al. (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of a PYD programme amongst 232 lower secondary school age students in Macau. The researchers followed students from s1 through to s3. The study employed a single group pre- post- test design: young people completed a questionnaire at the start of the first year programme and at its end. Then students completed the questionnaire at the beginning of the second year programme and again at its end. The researchers used the Chinese Youth Development Scale, which is sub-divided into 15 sub-scales using a number of validated instruments (p. 2). The findings are difficult to interpret, but it can be summarised that the researchers found little statistically significant evidence in 'objective measures' that the programme led to the desired outcomes, despite the students themselves evaluating the programme positively. The researchers found that 'drop outs' and new young people entering the programme, as well as the small sample size and the lack of a RCT design limited the conclusions that could be drawn. They also hypothesise that the lack of positive outcomes could be due to a number of factors including decreased social cohesion due to changes in the group, the newness of the intervention to the teachers and youth work staff limiting effective delivery.

Smith et al. (2009) discuss a tool called 'Youth Programme Quality Assessment' used to evaluate quality in the 'out-of-school-time' sector in the US. They gathered quantitative data regarding nature of provision and demographics on 'twenty cities, counties, and states that planned to apply the quality construct' (p. 114). Without discussing the tool in detail, the authors propose that it can 'help create the conditions that managers and youth workers need to accept, adopt, and

sustain quality accountability and improvement initiatives' (p. 124).

Sabaratham and Klein (2006) detail the implementation and early results of another evaluation tool for PYD. The tool is called the Rochester Evaluation of Asset Development for Youth (READY) and was piloted by nine community-based youth organisations in New York between 2002-03. Altogether, data was collected from 1070 young people. The researchers found that 'those youth who reported feeling more connected to the programs in which they participated and having more active and frequent participation had consistently higher scores on measured outcomes' (p. s88). The researchers found statistically significant positive relationships between 'length of participation' and 'connectedness' and 'self-control, empathy and communication' (p. s91). The importance of depth and duration of engagement is consonant with qualitative evidence from case studies reported on earlier.

Surko et al. (2006) report on another New York-based project used to develop state-wide PYD outcome indicators. Card sorts, concept mapping and then cluster analysis was used in order to group indicators perceived as important from different community-based youth organisations state-wide. Crucially, as well as policy makers and youth work professionals, 91 young people (aged 18-21) were involved in the process. The results showed that 'strengths-based items' were on average rated higher than problem or risk focused indicators. This study demonstrates an attempt to generate a degree of collective ownership over indicators that also involves young people.

Riser et al. (2006) report on the large scale implementation of a PYD programme called Assets Coming Together (ACT) for Youth, again based in New York. The researchers detail the process of the 'Erie County' community development partnership enlisting all school districts in the county to carry out a survey of 50,000 young people's assessment of their assets measured by validated scales. This gives an example of large scale buy-in and consequently the generation of large-scale baseline data, with which to then compare and track 'asset development' of young people participating in PYD programmes.

Powers & Tiffany (2006) discuss the potential of PAR approaches in a range of youth work settings, including New York. However, the study was summarised in the European findings and is therefore not reported on here. Del Felice & Solheim (2011) study intercultural learning in youth organisations in a number of different countries. Data was 'gathered through a capacity building project of a network of youth organisations (2006-present)' and an 'online survey of 92 youth workers from 36 different countries' (p. 1096) broken down as follows: '43 from African countries, 23 from Asia, 17 from Europe, 4 from North America, 3 from Latin America and 2 from the Middle East' (p. 1098). Although typical activities are not clear, the youth organisations focused on tended to focus on development and peace building activities. Testimony from young people themselves suggests that the following outcomes: (1) learning practical administrative and managerial skills; (2) increased person sense of empowerment; (3) instilling a sense of optimism regarding the potential for positive social change; (4) intercultural learning. These are grouped by the researchers under skills for 'active citizenship' (p. 1099-1100). Reflecting on the findings, the researchers posit that 'active citizenship' is an emergent, lived-process. Accepting this for argument's sake, the researchers then reason that predetermined outcome measures are inappropriate and recommend that 'room for emergent learning should be allowed, so that youth can reflect on their own needs and issues, as well as to develop their own learning methodologies' (p. 1107). This echoes the criticism of predetermined outcome measures of commentators previously discussed.

Edwards and Campbell (2009) report the results of an Australian youth work initiative called the Gateway Programme run by the Jesuit Social Services. This general programme was aimed predominantly at the personal and social development of 'at-risk' young people and involved a plethora of different activities including ICT skills, residentials, arts and music workshops, a youth café run as a social enterprise, to but name a few. Qualitative and quantitative responses from participants provided evidence that the programme improved 'health, social, education, training and employment outcomes' (p. 10).

Hansen and Crawford (2011) report on the results of a large scale qualitative research project into eleven 'high quality' non-targeted youth work programmes in the United States with a diverse range of foci and activities (including civic activism, arts and agriculture) . Data collection methods included researcher observation, 648 interviews with 108 young people and 123 interviews with 23 youth workers over the course of two years from 2005. The researchers used 'grounded theory', arguing convincingly that there is a need for theory generated through the 'ground up' study of actual youth work practice rather than importing in abstract concepts from other fields and applying them to practice.

Hansen and Crawford found that through participating in civic activism, young people learned what they call 'strategic thinking' skills, which can be utilised in various aspects of their lives. As the researchers understand it: p. 75):

Strategic thinking involves learning to think 'strategically' about dynamic human-systems (e.g. government), setting real-world goals that intersect these systems and extend beyond the short-term (e.g. over the course of months), and using pragmatic reasoning, or 'systems thinking,' to achieve goals. It is a skill, among others, that has received greater recognition among a wide range of stakeholders as important for adult life in the 'new,' global economy.

The authors report that participants learned to anticipate and react to failures and setbacks. More specifically, they learned how to mobilise resources, frame their communications for different audiences and use sequential reasoning to anticipate and plan for contingencies (p. 76). Through in-depth qualitative research over a sustained period of time, Hansen generated ground theory about how young people learned to think strategically through youth work. The success factors were consistent with key tenets of critical pedagogy and youth work methodology:

- Young people identified a meaningful issue they wanted to address (p. 75)
- Tactical challenges arose in relation to real world issues that they had identified and this investment provided motivation to respond strategically to these challenges (p. 76)
- The sustained support of youth workers skilled in responding to young people's needs and 'scaffolding' their own self-directed and collective learning with appropriate resources (in this case training on event planning and action research) (p. 76).

The authors conclude by giving an account of how this 'ground up' theory building can then be used to inform subsequent quantitative research. Insightfully, they also urge that we 'exercise caution when ascribing outcomes or the climate of the youth programme to the youth worker' (p. 79). Instead, they argue for an 'ecological' approach that recognises the complexity of human learning and development.

McCalman et al.(2009) report the findings of a PAR study in a predominantly Aboriginal Australian community that focused on the potential for such an approach to generate intergenerational community learning. The research was based on reflective group work, interviews and focus groups. The researchers found that PAR generated increased social cohesion, improvements in workforce capacity amongst young people (p. s59). The researchers suggest that their study backs up wider international findings that PAR can result in 'improved health outcomes and quality of life for disadvantaged groups' (p. s63).

Roholt et al. (2008) also reflect on the use of PAR in youth work. Their qualitative research focuses on in-depth case study of what they call 'civic youth work' in the USA carried out over six years. Three salient methodological points orientations were observable in their research: (1) citizenship is a lived-process not a predetermined set of outcomes; (2) evaluation is a collective political act and therefore outcomes are collective as well as individual; (3) evaluation begins not with abstract concepts but with the lived experiences and emerging individual and collective understanding of young people themselves. The researchers also point out the 'virtuous cycle' element of PAR that other approaches verify: young people through these processes learn

research skills that they can carry through to other aspects of their youth work and other aspects of their lives.

Ngai (2005) explores through in-depth interviews how detached youth workers in Hong Kong found strategies to circumvent their policy roles as social control agents in order to work alongside young people on social action projects. Workers established a centre for youth advocacy, worked to establish their own grassroots support networks and worked alongside the young people, providing support where needed. A weakness of the study is that it does not include the voices of young people themselves. However, the data provides narrative evidence from the youth workers' points of view that through the formation of an action group on local facilities, young people gained advocacy skills. Furthermore, the youth workers sought wider community support by making the young peoples' work visible, which led to the young people being included and respected by the wider community.

## DOCTORAL THESES

Belsterling (2006), working with theories of 'adolescent attachment', investigated the relationship between young college students' previous relationships with Christian youth workers and self-esteem and loneliness. For this cross-sectional study, Belsterling surveyed 425 (248 females, 176 males) first year Christian college students from the North East United States. The researcher reasoned that across eligible colleges in the geographical region around 365 responses were needed to make generalisable inferences (at a 95% confidence level) about first year Christian college students in the region, based on enrolment figures. The sample requirements were therefore met. Validated scales were used to measure self-esteem and loneliness. The researcher found statistically significant and meaningful relationships between youth worker attachment and psychosocial adjustment, even when comparing for parental adjustment. Since this study reported faith-based youth work, it was not clear that it met the 'universal' criteria. However, on balance a decision was made to highlight the findings here.

Moroney (2011) used a range of methods to investigate young peoples' and youth workers' perceptions of quality in a PYD programme. This case study was based on a PYD programme in an urban out-of-school-time setting in the mid-west United States. This is another example of research that develops tools for outcome measurement whilst involving the views of young people. Young people were involved primarily through focus groups. The researcher's data suggested that the development of authentic relationships over time was regarded by all (young people, youth workers and project managers) as being of primary importance. In the words of Moroney:

The participants described every aspect of program quality and youth outcomes in relational terms. This suggests that staff/youth relationships may be integral to youth participation and development of positive youth development outcomes. It appears critical to continue to explore the characteristics of these relationships to better understand the role of relationships in fostering resilience.

Moroney also expressed concern, based on the evidence of this single case study of the so-called 'pistachio effect' discussed previously. The research 'surfaced the issue that quality OST programs may be serving youth who are already traditionally successful in other settings' leading Moroney to observe that 'Positive Youth Development cannot be a universal approach for all youth if practitioners cannot successfully engage all youth in PYD initiatives' (p. 154).

Wu (2013) investigates young people's learning experiences in the Hong Kong PYD programme 'Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programs' (PATHS). This qualitative study draws on data collected from focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted with twenty young participants. Interestingly, the motivation for the study emerges from the fact that out of 338 publications on the PATHS project, only 13 use qualitative research and none conduct in-depth interviews in order to understand the participants' own experiences (p. 13). This, in itself, is a significant finding.

Teitle (2012) seeks to 'theorize hangout' through an in-depth case study of an open youth work centre in a Midwestern city in the United States. The youth centre accommodated young people aged 12-18. Data was collected over six months of researcher observations and in-depth interviews with young people using the centre. This research is valuable as it focuses precisely on the meanings, purposes and impacts that participants attach to open youth work themselves. The thesis illustrates tensions between these meanings and the need to gather evidence by imposing meaning on young peoples' own activities. The following narrative extract illustrates this well (p. 75):

Max is hanging out. Draped over worn couch cushions, his long, dyed-black hair falling over his eyes as he watches a videogame on the large screen television. Around him, other loose-limbed youths text, chat, and experiment with guitar chords...But Max isn't at home, and a brisk attendance check from Maggie interrupts his dalliance:

Maggie: 'Hey Max, what are you doing today? Art? Music? Games? Max ignores her for a full minute, eventually giving a grudging 'no.' She pauses, pen in hand, and waits. Max: 'Just put whatever—I guess you can't just say we're doing nothing.' Maggie: 'Art, then?' She inquires. Max: 'Yeah, art...'

[...] There were clipboards and forms. There were boxes to check. An infrastructure was in place here that made it impossible to let kids be, and necessary to get them to do. Or, at the very least, to represent them as doing

Atkinson (2012) presents an in-depth case study of a youth work programme in the American Midwest called 'Freedom Fellows'. This youth work programme was rooted in critical pedagogy theory and was aimed at developing young peoples' capacity to act as collective agents for social justice. Rather than advocate for young people or work to develop individual capacities, this youth work aimed to empower young people with advocacy skills. Through evidence gathered through researcher observation and in-depth interviews with young people, Atkinson found the following outcomes (p. 262):

Freedom Fellows report an increased willingness to speak their opinions at school or with other adults, a willingness and ability to confront others about their oppressive behaviour and interest in developing new socially conscious programs in their schools and communities. Although tentative, these findings suggest that young people transfer the positive developmental gains made through activism programs to other important developmental settings. The impact of activism programming on young people's ability and confidence to meaningfully engage in schools, youth organizations and communities could be profound. At this time, more knowledge of the context and processes of such transference is needed.

Robertson's (2010) ethnographic case study of an open 'afterschool programme' in California 'describes and interprets...the impact of involvement on its participants'. Using a blend of researcher observation, focus group and interviews with participants, Robertson investigates the meanings that young people ascribe to their own involvement. Robertson finds that young people emphasised in different ways the importance of open youth work spaces in relational terms. That is, the participants valued having an open space where they could explore their own identities through relationships with others and gain a sense of belonging. The structured, yet open, space provided 'access to a variety of internal, intermediary, and external resources that they can use in significant decisions, critical situations, and in working towards goals that bring about positive outcomes for their lives' (p. 174)

Finally, Lawrence-Jacobson's (2005) ethnographic case study of an 'intergenerational community action group' in a Midwestern American town. The research took a PAR approach and sought to empower young people and older adults to work together collectively to address issues of mutual concern at community level. Jacobson documented the outcomes of participation as well as identifying strategies for bringing youth and older adults together to affect change within their communities. Jacobson used pre- and post-intervention interviews, focus groups and researcher

observation as data collection methods. Participation was voluntary, the intervention was not targeted at particular groups of young people and the 'curriculum' was collectively negotiated between 'youth and older adults'. Findings suggested that young people gained knowledge and skills from the older participants that came to be regarded as role models of empowerment for later-life as strong intergenerational relationships developed.

# CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter begins by reflecting on the concept of universal youth work itself in the light of ground covered in this review. It then briefly revisits the question of what constitutes evidence before going on to summarise the evidence with respect to the following research questions:

1. *What theories and concepts shape contemporary youth work (2004-present)?*
2. *What outcomes arise from what we understand as universal youth work provision (2004-present)?*
3. *Can we demonstrate the link between universal youth work and the national outcomes (2004-present)?*

The chapter then finishes by reflecting on the challenges faced by universal youth work in light of the findings.

## 5.1 WHAT IS UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK? HOW USEFUL IS THE TERM? HOW WIDELY IS IT USED?

Universal youth work usually has two connotations: (1) a political commitment to universal services and welfare provision; (2) youth work interventions open in principle to all young people and not targeted at specific audiences.

There seems to be a general conflation between universal youth work with 'positive' framings of youth and targeted provision with 'deficit' framings of youth. Traditionally this has created a 'mischievous' and polarised debate on the respective merits and shortcomings of universal and targeted youth work (Williamson 2008).

Within this debate, universal provision is associated with a holistic approach based on voluntary participation and processes of non-predetermined informal learning/social pedagogy that start with the lived experiences of young people and produce soft outcomes. On the other hand, targeted provision is associated with meeting predetermined hard outcomes identified empirically through evidence-based policy. To put it crudely, the universal/targeted debate reflects a wider tension about youth work as art or youth work as science.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory shares a commitment to universalism and begins from positive framings of youth. However, it could be interpreted as an attempt to resolve the above tension as it is very much portrayed by its protagonists as a science, based on principles from developmental psychology (Schulman & Davies 2007)

Universal youth work is not the only term used in the youth work literature. Similar terms include generic youth work and open youth work. These terms are often used interchangeably. However, Davies and Merton (2009, pp.8–9) make some subtle distinctions between universal youth work, generic youth work and open youth work. In doing so, they argue that open youth work most accurately captures what practitioners mean when using such terms:

Universal provision we see as available to all potential users as a citizen's right, without financial or other qualifying tests. However, youth work has never had the statutory underpinning to ensure such non-selective availability. Moreover...even if universally available it is not necessarily 'open access' or 'open door' – the features which those using the term often seemed most anxious to highlight.



Generic provision embraces a range of inter-related, even integrated, facilities and opportunities...However, as entry may be restricted or filtered, ...such provision does not guarantee the inclusive 'openness' which youth workers and their managers seemed to be advocating when using the term.

Open access is the term we therefore use as most accurately and positively capturing... young people's engagement...not dependent on their having a prior label attached (other than, of course, 'young person').

In the searches on which this report is based, generic, open and universal youth work were regarded as interchangeable terms for the purposes of locating relevant literature. The distinction offered by Davies and Merton as described above is nevertheless potentially useful.

The commitment to universal youth work is recognised in policy documents across the UK and considerable attention has been paid to the relationship between universal and targeted services. Most (in)famously (albeit not in a Scottish context), the Connexions service tried to carve out a middle-ground, advocating for a principle of 'progressive universalism' with universal services differentiated according to need. Sceptical commentators argue that the role of universal youth work then becomes circumscribed and marginalised as a sort of feeder system to targeted services, formal education and other, more formalised provision for NEET populations (Spence 2004).

The term universal youth work is used in the review of the Value of youth work in Europe (Dunne et al. 2014). In this context, it is used to mean open provision. Open provision can be either issue-based or aimed at broad personal and social development. In this sense, issue based work can also be universal. If adults and young people being partners in the learning process and curriculum emerging from the lived experience of young people are regarded as foundational principles, then we cannot agree that predetermined issue based youth work at the extreme end of the spectrum is universal. Nevertheless, as youth workers, we know that productive work emerges constantly and unexpectedly from young people and youth workers acting creatively within policy constraints.

In literature on the Nordic countries, universal provision is used in the more openly ideological sense. For example:

The Nordic welfare system relies primarily on offering universal services. The idea behind this is that it is the role of a just society to offer similar services to different user groups, an idea that is internalised in the occupation of youth work (Forkyby & Kiilakoski 2014, p.8).

Within Europe, youth work is expected increasingly to demonstrate evidence the both 'soft' and 'hard' outcomes. This presents particular challenges for universal youth work. It is by nature an open and unpredictable enterprise. Many commentators have discussed how unpredictability haunts and undermines the universalism on which youth work practice is founded (Spence, 2004; Morgan, 2009; Verschelden et al., 2009; Taylor, 2010; Cooper, 2012). In an era of austerity, universal youth work has struggled to get funding across Europe (Dunne et al. 2014, p.13)

## **5.2. UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK AND OUTCOMES: WHAT COUNTS AS EVIDENCE?**

This is a primary question with which youth work professionals have to contend. Indeed in the UK there has been a Third Sector drive to produce metrics that measure the soft and hard outcomes of youth work and then express these in econometric terms that show social return on investment (SROI), based on counterfactual scenarios (NYA, n.d.; Moullin, Reeder, & Mcneil, 2011; YouthLink, 2012). Whilst organisations have pressed forward to achieve this task, the marginalisation of universal, open or generic provision becomes obvious. Firstly, in such provision, outcomes are emergent and negotiated with young people, rather than being defined in advance. Secondly, length and depth of engagement is voluntary and unpredictable. This means that:

- participation is vulnerable to 'self-selection'
- the same cohort of participants are not necessarily present for any length of time to be 'pre- and post-tested', whether against control groups or not
- there is no guaranteed opportunity for the sustained depth of engagement needed in order to use 'validated measurement tools' (NYA, n.d., p. 9).

There are two ways of looking at this: firstly, as a set of obstacles to be overcome; secondly, as contradicting the purpose of universal youth work. In the quasi-informal world of contemporary youth work, it is natural that young people (especially those who are 'hard to reach') might resist being trapped in the 'objective straightjacket' of indicators and metrics dreamed up by social scientists and policy makers in their 'best interests' (Taylor & Taylor 2013). Secondly, it has not gone unobserved that the drive towards systematic evidence gathering on and not with young people fundamentally changes the nature of the youth worker/participant relationship. For example, in an in-depth case study included in this review, the researcher remarked that 'young people were in the position of trading information about themselves for involvement' (Jones 2014, p.227).

Robust quantitative evidence is found most readily in the mainly North American literature on PYD. It nevertheless contends with these same issues. Some critical commentators have questioned (Hansen & Crowford 2011; Haudenhuyse, Theeboom, & Coalter, 2012; Batsleer, 2013; Taylor & Taylor, 2013; Archer, 2014):

- The philosophical coherence of attempts to operationalise, quantify and measure the outcomes of youth work
- The notion that positive youth outcomes can be attributed to, and in a sense 'owned' by youth workers and youth work organisations
- The tacit assumptions behind the concepts that underpin supposedly objective validated measurement instruments, such as pro-social outcomes and resilience.

This discussion can be located in the broader debates over professional identity and professionalisation, which consumes a large proportion of the youth work literature. Some equate measurement with acting as an instrument of control and surveillance. Others argue that a shared family of standardised concepts and indicators is necessary for creating the robust scientific evidence base needed to advocate for youth work (McKee 2011; Mundy-McPherson et al. 2012). Too often these debates result in the old dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative evidence, with 'radicals' advocating the use of narrative voice (In Defence of Youth Work 2012), which is subsequently dismissed by the 'evidence-based policy' nexus as anecdotal.

A wider issue perhaps, is what kinds of skills and knowledge do youth workers need to act as effective advocates (Judith Bessant 2009)? This might include literacy in social science methods, would also presumably extend to education and training in areas such as rhetoric, framing, behavioural economics, social psychology, social movement theory and so on, that advocacy workers in other fields (for example environmental communication) are increasingly incorporating into practice.

### **5.3 WHAT THEORIES AND CONCEPTS SHAPE CONTEMPORARY YOUTH WORK?**

The theoretical and conceptual section of chapter three was divided into three sections. Firstly, debates around the need to better define youth work were explored. It was recognised that youth work is geographically contingent, historically contested and difficult to define, and that a number of alternative framings for informal work with young people exist. Some commentators argued that consistent use of the term youth work along with a consistent vocabulary referring to a shared family of recognisable concepts was necessary for three reasons: firstly, professional recognition and solidarity; secondly, making the case for universal youth work as a fundamental

right of all people; evidencing impacts and outcomes more easily.

Secondly, arguments were presented that historical accounts of youth work practice might help to overcome knowledge fragmentation that exists within the field and provide a counter to the often ahistorical conceptual leaps made by policy professionals. In other words, ground up historical accounts might furnish practitioners with a needed understanding of the politics of policy. This is seen by some as particularly pertinent to the UK context, where the identity crisis of youth work is interpreted as a crisis of efficiency to be solved through a language of evidence-based practice. It was suggested that historical accounts might help to shed light on a number of important dynamics, such as:

- The relationship between youth work and wider social change
- The tension between the rhetoric and reality of universal youth work provision
- The historical relationship between knowledge workers, youth workers and the state: evidence-based policy or policy-based evidence?

Thirdly, the nature and purpose of youth work was addressed. Barwick (2006) discussed a common shift towards a language of 'at risk' youth in Australia, New Zealand and the UK. It was argued that despite the UK policy rhetoric around progressive universalism, the notion of at-risk youth exists in tension with the inherently risky process of open youth work. Schulman and Davies (2007) discussed positive youth development (PYD) theory for an 'English audience'. One of the stated principles of PYD is progressive universalism, meaning that it is for everybody. PYD also claims to be 'strengths' or 'assets' based and is based on concepts from developmental psychology. Critical commentators argue that PYD has not emerged organically from the youth work profession in the UK but has been imported in by managers and policy makers to give a theoretical gloss to the 'positive activities' agenda, which was discussed by Adamson and Poultney (2010). Critical commentators argue that the positive activities agenda merely emphasises structured recreation for risky youth and marginalises youth work based on open-ended processes of informal education.

The theme of youth at risk is continued by Baillergeau and Hoijink (2010) who analyse it in the context of youth work in the Netherlands. The authors claim that this discourse is also pervasive there. They claim that universal youth work took hold alongside a shift towards universal welfare provision in the 1960 and 1970s but failed in that it predominantly attracted middle-class youth. Subsequently, there has been a discernible shift towards targeting at risk groups. Fouche et al. (2010) had little to contribute to debates around the purpose of youth work, and indeed, this was not the aim of their work. McKee et al. (2010) critique the notion of mere structured recreation and emphasise the explicitly educational function of youth work, based on the principle of voluntary engagement. The authors emphasise employability benefits but with the caveat that universal services should not be regarded as a mere stepping stone to more targeted or formal provision.

Dickson et al. (2013) synthesise the international literature for an Irish audience. In doing so, their report draws heavily on PYD but also categorises other theoretical/conceptual approaches under the following headings:

- Socio-ecological model
- Empowerment
- Developmental assets
- Other (e.g. social capital, experiential education, service learning pedagogy, relational theory, critical consciousness).

The 'socio-ecological model', focuses on young peoples' 'multiple selves' in different 'socio-geographical contexts'. The empowerment approach argues that positive outcomes for young

people follow from developing the tools to critically analyse the operation of economic, political and social power and authority through informal learning processes.

Finally, Dunne et al. (2014) contrast universal to targeted work and cross this with youth work for broad personal and social development and youth work addressing specific issues. This produces four types: universal-open-ended; universal-specific issues; targeted-open ended; and targeted-specific issues. Dunne et al synthesise the European literature and propose four conceptual models:

- Treatment approaches
- Reform approaches
- Advocacy
- Empowerment.

Empowerment was been explained above. Treatment approaches start from the premise that young people are problematic 'and must be 'treated' in order to have them conform to societal norms'. Reform approaches speak the language of social exclusion and tailor youth work interventions to 'disadvantaged' young people in order to integrate them into prevailing social norms. Advocacy approaches 'are closer to the empowerment model and what Hurley and Treacy described as 'critical social education' compared to the reform or treatment models, in that it sees societal structures as being problematic and disempowering young people'.

Three major thematic groupings emerged from the youth work literature. These were:

- Difference and inequality
- Professionalisation
- Theories of learning and pedagogy.

The strand of the literature addressing difference and inequality accommodates debates on the role of faith in youth work, gender, race and ethnicity, legal status, class, sexuality, ability, place and so on. This literature is useful because it draws attention towards the specific challenges of maintaining a commitment to universalism in particular places at particular times (e.g. ethnically diverse communities or 'post-conflict' societies), and how some supposedly 'open' forms of youth work merely reinforce gendered, raced or classed social norms

Literature identified as raising the issue of professionalisation broadly encompasses the various dimensions to debates over professionalisation in youth work. Overall, this theme explored two driving questions: (1) is professionalisation desirable and why? (2) what does it mean to be and act as a professional? Unsurprisingly, a large volume of the literature is devoted to issues of professional identity or rather youth work being a profession in perpetual search for identity. Prominent tensions emerge between youth work as an art and a science. A prominent strand of the literature emerges around professional practice interpreted as an ethical engagement, where different ways of understanding ethics are explored. Literature on training needs and youth worker education belongs in this grouping. This conversation on professional education is usually conducted on the rationale that it is part and parcel of creating a more skilled and credible workforce equipped to advocate effectively for youth work's potential to achieve greater social justice. Also, theoretical and conceptual discussions on the relationship between youth work, activism and broader social movements belongs to this grouping. Such discussions contend with the tensions between those who believe that starting from the needs of young people is in itself radical and those who would identify as being 'radicals who just happen to be youth workers'. Most significantly of all for the purposes of this report, conceptual debates over the outcomes agenda and attempts to theorise outcomes belong to this theme. At one end of the spectrum of debate are youth workers from the In Defence of Youth Work campaign, who view the attempt

of organisations such as the Young Foundation and the National Youth Agency to quantify 'soft outcomes' as irredeemable and question the credibility of the notion that youth work can 'own' outcomes. On the other hand, there are those who argue that they do not seek to develop outcomes 'because of a love of measurement' but 'to understand how youth work makes its contribution so we can support the youth work profession and also to apply what we learn to other professions that intersect the lives of youth' (Hansen & Crowford 2011, p.71). The outcomes debate is thus intertwined with ongoing debates on managerialism and power.

The final strand is theories of learning and pedagogy. Overwhelmingly youth work is viewed both in practice-based literature and in the academic literature as an educational and/or learning-based practice. The youth work literature draws heavily on experiential learning theory. Youth work is often portrayed as a process of informal or non-formal education and learning characterised by voluntary and open processes that are intrinsically unpredictable and therefore not amenable to predetermined learning outcomes. Critics argue that this means that anything goes. One consequence is that informal learning can act as a euphemism for indoctrination, either political or faith-based. In turn, this seemingly foundational principle of youth work has generated quite an active discussion on the notion of 'curriculum' in youth work: whether or not there is a place for it; whether it is best understood as product or process and so on. This entire debate is particularly instructive in Scotland given the relationship between youth work and the Curriculum for Excellence. Connected to all of this exists a burgeoning literature on the relationship between youth work and schools and the role of youth work in schools.

Studies of universal, open or generic youth work also frequently draw on various theories of critical pedagogy in a fruitful way. Whereas informal and experiential learning need not be normatively oriented, the critical pedagogy literature is expressly concerned with social justice, equality, intercultural learning and has been fruitfully employed to theorise both the shortcomings and the positive outcomes of being involved in universal provision. Closely related to both the critical pedagogy literature and the outcomes literature is a growing literature on participatory action research (PAR), because it recognises that evaluation (like education and learning) is a political act and aims to empower young people with the skills to identify injustice and advocate and organise collectively to address it.

#### **5.4. WHAT DO EXISTING REVIEWS TELL US ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK? CAN THESE OUTCOMES BE MAPPED ONTO THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL OUTCOMES?**

There is evidence to suggest that internationally (particularly in the U.S.) (Dickson et al. 2013), across Europe (Dunne et al. 2014) and across the UK (McKee et al. 2010), that youth work provision has positive outcomes which can be mapped across the spectrum of the Scottish National Outcomes. A general synthesis of the European evidence groups outcomes into the following areas: developing skills and competencies; strengthening networks and social capital; changing behaviours perceived as 'risky' (Dunne et al. 2014, p. 138). Furthermore, the specific skills relate to: 'self-efficacy; resilience; communication skills; confidence and 'social' and 'interpersonal skills' (p. 138).

With respect to the outcomes of universal youth work specifically, practitioners might look to the US-based PYD tradition if they think that the comparison is reasonable. More specifically, Dunne et al (2014) focus on 'universal youth work' in Europe. What they can say on their assessment of the evidence in combination with primary research is that universal youth work can have positive outcomes in relation to (p. 158):

- Educational attainment
- Employability
- Health and well-being.

Whilst increased educational attainment also holds for the participation of so-called at-risk or socially excluded youth, there is a lack of evidence around the extent to which employability and health and wellbeing outcomes hold for 'risky' youth (p. 158).

Overall however, the picture painted is one of a great challenge in relation to the evidence base around outcomes. At a Europe-wide level, 'there is little evaluation data of youth work practice itself, which hampers the identification of the outcomes and the contribution that youth work makes in the lives of young people' (Dunne et al. 2014, p. 176). In the UK and Ireland, there is a general dearth of 'specific investigations of youth work activities' (Dickson et al. 2013, p. 46).

## **5.5. WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE FEATURED IN THIS REVIEW TELL US ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK?**

Evidence in this review has been organised firstly by geographical region so the reader can focus on literature relevant to Scotland, rest of the UK (RoUK), Europe and outside Europe as they please. The findings are then organised by type of literature and then by data collection methods (quantitative, mixed methods or qualitative) so that the reader can focus on the kind of evidence they are interested in. For brevity, this section summarises only UK evidence, which is the most directly relevant.

### **Scotland and Rest of UK**

There is an obvious lack of evidence regarding the outcomes of universal youth work in Scotland and the rest of the UK. There is clearly a need for more research in this area at a more general level.

There is robust quantitative evidence to suggest that 'participation in generic 'youth club' settings increases the tendency towards exclusion based on various social exclusion outcomes 'including lack of qualifications, unemployment, smoking, drinking, and crime' even when accounting for various control indicators (Feinstein et al. 2006, p.305). However, this same research suggests that participation in sports clubs, church-based clubs and to a lesser extent, uniformed youth work organisations, protects against these same social exclusion outcomes. The researchers acknowledge that 'selection bias' is at work and that the negative social outcomes of youth club attendance and positive social outcomes of sports, church and uniformed based participation may owe to wider structural factors related to class rather than participation the clubs themselves. What they regard as of more significance is the lack of evidence that youth club participation did anything to ameliorate social exclusion risk for the most vulnerable (p.321).

A limited number of mixed methods studies combining qualitative and quantitative methods were identified (Merton, 2004; HMIE, 2009; Pears Foundation, 2009; Jones, 2014). The research into the impact of the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award is broad ranging and robust (Pears Foundation 2010). It synthesises a large volume of qualitative and quantitative data and in doing so it demonstrates that participation in the DofE brings about positive outcomes in relation to:

- Developing positive attitudes towards new experiences
- Building resilience and self-esteem with those with the 'lowest starting points...most likely to benefit from participation'
- Community engagement
- Physical and mental wellbeing
- Employment skills and prospects.

In addition, evidence is presented that young people think that DofE has led to positive outcomes across each of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) four capacities. Backing this up, subjective responses to surveys across 16 local authorities show that young people participating

in youth work believe that it has led to positive CfE outcomes across the four capacities (HMIE 2009). Merton et al. (2004) investigated the impact of youth work on young people in England using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. Compelling evidence was presented that participation in youth work led to the following positive outcomes:

- Improved personal skills
- Improved self-confidence
- Improved 'ability to make decisions...and take control'
- Improved ability to 'understand people who are different from themselves' (p. 47-9).

A range of qualitative evidence from journal articles and theses is insightful for two main reasons:

1. It provides insight into the relationship between process and outcome.
2. It provides compelling insights into the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of open and universal youth work provision.

Overall, qualitative case study evidence suggests that youth work can lead to positive outcomes in the following areas as well as across the CfE four capacities (Merton, 2004; Arches & Fleming, 2007; Pope, 2007; Loynes, 2008; Pears Foundation, 2009; Coburn, 2011a; Ashrowan, 2013; Deuchar & Ellis, 2013; Dickens & Lonie, 2013; McLaughlin, 2013; Jones, 2014; Nolas, 2014):

- Build self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships.
- Create learning and develop new skills.
- Encourage positive group atmospheres.
- Build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control.
- Develop a 'world view' which widens horizons and invites social commitment

As well as this, there is evidence to suggest that youth work could have positive impacts on health, wellbeing and safety through creating effective partnerships with schools and healthcare institutions (Percy-Smith 2006; Percy-Smith 2007; Yates et al. 2009; Deuchar & Ellis 2013; McKee et al. 2010). However, qualitative research also suggests that ideological differences and entrenched professional identities remain a significant barrier to successful partnership working, particularly if it is to be a partnership of equals (Yates et al., 2009; Bradford & Byrne, 2010; Deuchar & Ellis, 2013).

Taking the above qualitative evidence as a whole, a number of themes reoccur that suggest particular success factors in universal youth work achieving positive outcomes. These are:

- Prolonged and stable engagement over time
- Voluntary engagement in processes that begin with lived experience yet provide structured opportunities to problematise and reflect on that lived experience
- Adults and young people building authentic relationships and working as genuine partners in the learning process
- Starting where young people are 'at' by taking their forms of cultural expression seriously

In addition, qualitative case study evidence demonstrates the importance of space, place

and mobility in generating opportunities where young people can explore their identities and biographies in relation with others so that intercultural learning can take place and territorialism and sectarianism can be challenged (Barton & Barton, 2007; Pope, 2007; Loynes, 2008; Coburn, 2011a, 2011b; Jones, 2014).

Two studies employing oral history methods (Arches & Fleming, 2007; Pears Foundation, 2009) revealed that participation in volunteering and community action through youth work generated learning, knowledge and skills that were still being utilised by participants decades on, as older adults. It seems striking that such little research of this kind exists, since it holds such particular potential for capturing lasting impacts over time.

In-depth longitudinal ethnographic approaches are particularly useful because they help us to understand precisely what young people feel as though they get from participating in open youth work spaces as well as tracking change in participants over time. Two good examples are Coburn's (2011a; Coburn 2011b) work in a Scottish open youth work space and Nolas's (2014) work in an English open youth work space. These cases suggest that young people view the value of such work in relational terms; they are spaces where they can feel safe and secure, and develop their own personal identities though communicating across cultural and generational boundaries.

Such research might be particularly powerful if combined with quantitative methods. However, acknowledging the position of those youth workers and writers who are unconvinced by what they see as the quasi-scientific rhetoric of PYD (Taylor 2010) and who hold that instrumental outcome-driven youth work stifles the approach that made it appealing to policy makers in the first place (Jones 2014; Williamson 2008), such research is even more vital:

[T]he absence of empirical research on youth work practice that captures the perspectives of young people and youth workers themselves means that the challenges facing youth work can only be addressed through rhetoric and outcome-driven research methods (Nolas 2014, p.28).

In addition to this, research exists which demonstrates the potential power for participatory action research (PAR) in youth work. So far, this section only reported on Scotland and the rest of the UK for the sake of brevity and because as this is where findings have most direct relevance. However, since there is not much literature connecting this to UK youth work, it is useful here to point to literature from further afield.

PAR complements the youth work approach because as well as young people and adults being partners in the learning process, they also become partners in the evaluation and research process. PAR, like critical pedagogy approaches used in youth work, recognises that learning and outcomes are collective, and furthermore are political constructs. PAR, like critical pedagogy, can empower young people with research and communication skills that translate into other areas of their lives beyond youth work and have the potential to be transformational (Lawrence-Jacobson 2005; Powers & Tiffany 2006; Arches & Fleming 2007; Percy-Smith 2007; Flicker et al. 2008; Dick 2009; McCalman et al. 2009; Hansen & Crawford 2011; Lisahunter et al. 2013). This literature is also valuable because it highlights obstacles and challenges to working across generational boundaries for social change.

The final section in this summary examines the tension between accommodating difference and challenging inequality within a universal approach that was highlighted in both the empirical and theoretical literature and emerged as a significant finding.

## **5.6 WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE FEATURED IN THIS REVIEW REVEAL ABOUT THE CHALLENGES FACED BY UNIVERSAL YOUTH WORK?**

The case was made above that universal youth work can be a particularly generative space for learning about inequality and difference. However, empirical evidence drawing on the experiences and perceptions of youth workers and young people (using both quantitative and



qualitative methods) reveals tensions between the rhetoric and reality of universal provision. This theme reoccurs in the UK, Europe and in North America.

As touched upon in chapters three and four, universalism and openness are ideals that in practice often fall short of the mark. More in-depth ethnographic accounts of universal youth work spaces that explore this tension are needed. These are particularly valuable because they provide rich insights into local and historically constituted dynamics that the PYD literature sometimes fails to acknowledge by starting from standardised ahistorical concepts informed by developmental psychology.

Mason's (2013) doctoral thesis on universal youth work in a multi-ethnic area in the North of England is an excellent example of how generational, faith-based, ethnic and territorial boundaries can work to make universal provision nothing more than a rhetorical fantasy unless they are directly and purposefully addressed at a community-wide level. Such research reveals differences between what young people and the wider adult communities to which they belong want.

Sinha and Uppal (2009) powerfully capture this contradiction between particularity and difference through the phrase 'particular universalisms'. They explore how the protective effects of ostensibly 'universal' joined-up youth provision are denied to young migrants in East London, who are positioned as 'lesser youth' on account of their legal status.

Cooper (2012), through participant observation in an open youth work setting in England, makes the case that a policy discourse preoccupied with providing positive activities and addressing the NEET crisis makes it very difficult to do critical 'problem posing' work which directly addresses inequality and difference. She argues that so-called 'open' settings often reproduce sexist gender norms. Similarly, Batsleer (Janet Batsleer 2013, p.296) argues that:

Project designs which have been directed by the State cannot really be regarded as democratic even when young people are engaged with voluntarily and through conversation. The valorisation of positive male role models which underpins projects aiming to reduce 'anti-social' and promote 'pro-social' behaviour mobilises heteronormative models of family dynamics, specifically of mothering and fathering and enacts what are frequently militarised forms of masculinity accompanied by a mourning femininity. In this way social education does not 'practice otherwise' but reinforces and entrenches existing social relations.

Lest we are too quick to romanticise the 'Nordic model', research into the views and experiences of young people in Nordic countries reveals similar dynamics and challenges. Powerful evidence is presented that rhetorically universal provision can become dominated by particular groups—particularly white indigenous working class men—often to the detriment of women, migrants and ethnic minorities (Harinen et al. 2012; Kivijärvi 2013; Kivijärvi & Kivijarvi 2014; Forkyby & Kiilakoski 2014).

However, the dynamics of participation in open youth work spaces is clearly contingent on the historical and social dynamics unique to different countries. For example, Meuth et al. (2014, p.88), drawing on German language research by Prein and van Santen (2012), highlights that:

'Open' youth work, which implies open and unconditional access, is primarily used by young people from families with limited educational and financial resources, including youth who come from a migration background. In contrast, associative youth work structured by membership and recruitment from specific civic or religious milieus attracts more middle-class young people who tend to have a higher educational level, and thus tend to be more selective.

One might reasonably (if ambitiously) conclude that comparative European research could generate very interesting insights regarding both the processes and outcomes of universal youth work.

# CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

This review has identified and critically engaged with the evidence available in relation to the impact of 'universal' youth work. In doing so it attempts to define universal youth work and place it in the wider context of the theoretical and conceptual literature on youth work. It has explored academic and grey literature in order to identify what evidence exists in relation to the relationship between universal youth work and positive outcomes for young people. It has sought, where possible to relate these to the Scottish policy context.

What became clear from this review is the definitional dilemma that underlies any discussion or description of the role and purpose of youth work. There is a plethora of contrasting – and often contradictory – language and concepts used to describe and define youth work. Similarly there is an array of practice that shares some of the principles, traditions and theoretical drivers as youth work although not defined or described as such. Despite this lack of clarity the extensive body of literature reviewed here points toward some core concepts and principles that help to shape our understanding.

Chapter one located universal youth work in various policy contexts. Chapter two gave an account of the review methods. Chapter three synthesised insights and evidence from existing reviews published between 2004-14. Chapter four presented the findings of the literature examined for this particular review. Chapter five summarised and discussed these findings, suggesting potential pathways for future research.

A number of key points emerge from the research. Firstly, there are the definitional issues. How does universal youth work differ from open youth work and generic youth work? Is PYD compatible with universal youth work? Greater conceptual clarity in this regard will be important for further research. Universal youth work can be defined as youth work that all young people have a right to participate in. In this sense, universal youth work represents both a type of provision and a political commitment. As a type of provision, universal youth work is open to all young people (not targeted at particular groups), and its purpose is not pre-determined or aimed at addressing specific issues or problems as defined by policy makers.

Secondly, we identify the need to re-theorise universal youth work to reflect the cultural and geographical complexity of life for young people in Scotland today. This question is connected to the need to generate theory from the 'ground up' by researching how young people; youth workers and the wider community negotiate universal, open or generic youth work 'spaces'. Such spaces are always opened by someone with some purpose in mind. Once we ask, 'opened by whom and to what purpose?', other ways of thinking about youth work spaces emerge: is the youth work space public or private? Is it secular or does it aspire to accommodate a range of faiths? Is it an invited space or an invented space? That is to say, to what extent do young people have ownership over the shaping the space itself and to what ends? Who has the power to make the space a place and what meanings are ascribed to it? Greater attention should be paid to the lived dynamics between space, place, mobility and culture in universal youth work. Research into universal youth work which takes an intersectionality approach might also be useful. Intersectionality emerged from black feminism, queer theory and post-colonial studies. Applying an intersectional lens to the study of universal youth work would involve analysing how specific intersections of ability, class, ethnicity, faith, gender, legal status, sexual orientation and geographical location shape power dynamics in particular settings and particular times.

This research did find evidence that universal youth work produces positive outcomes and that these outcomes translate quite easily into the various Scottish National Outcomes. Evidence suggests that universal youth work settings can generate a range of health and wellbeing outcomes, and can provide safe yet challenging spaces for personal and social development and intercultural learning. However, at the risk of overemphasising, it all depends on what we understand by universal youth work. It also depends on what we mean by evidence.

The majority of the research is qualitative case study research or cross sectional research, which is only generalisable in limited ways. Given the contingency and openness of universal youth work, it is debatable whether generalisability is achievable in any meaningful sense. There is a lack of quantitative research, in particular a lack of quantitative research guided by theories and insights generated from qualitative longitudinal designs. Oral history research has revealed powerful and lasting impacts of participating in youth work decades on. More research of this kind would help to understand past practices and how, if at all, transformative learning was generated. It should be noted that for those who wish to use them, tool kits of indicators and metrics for measuring youth work outcomes have been devised by the Young Foundation and the National Youth Agency.

Participatory Action Research approaches that involve young people and adults as partners in the research as well as the learning process hold promise and ensure that processes remain accountable to young people themselves. Comparative European research on countries with an explicit commitment to universalistic principles within youth work would generate useful insights and transnational learning regarding the challenges faced by and outcomes of universal youth work.

This review was initially commissioned in order to support the many youth work providers urgently seeking ways to demonstrate the impact, for the young people they work with, of their programmes and projects. The pressure to evidence outcomes in order to secure funding to maintain or develop services can be overwhelming, especially for the many small youth work agencies. We anticipated that creating a common understanding of the evidence in relation to universal youth work held the possibility to reduce the need for every agency having to seek out and present such evidence every time they sought funding. Rather, they could use the evidence presented here as the starting point for a more local, contextualised account of their work and the benefits it provided for the young people and the community in which it was located.

This study has identified the contribution that universal youth work can make to health and well-being, its contribution to improving formal educational outcomes, and some impact on employability. It has not however provided the fully rounded overall picture that might have been hoped for. Instead it has illuminated the many gaps in the peer reviewed evidence base, and the need for the wider engagement of young people and youth workers in contributing to such work in the future.

The evidence we have reported demonstrates achievement of particular outcomes because those were the outcomes we chose to measure, recognised as possible to measure, or were required to measure by funders and policy makers. We believe that the next stage of development has to be a wider engagement in such investigations. Just as youth work seeks to support young people's capacities and confidence, we should be driving forward the youth work sector's confidence in itself and capacity for constructive self-examination. This next stage has to involve engaging the wider youth work sector, including young people themselves, in identifying the questions that are important for youth work and for young people, and working together to collectively contribute the evidence base for universal youth work.

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# APPENDIX 1. BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF EXISTING REVIEWS

Year	Title	Author(s)/ Editor(s)	Geographical scope	Type of review	Brief description	Search methods disclosed?
2006	Youth work today: A review of the issues and challenges	Barwick, H.	New Zealand, Australia and the UK	'State of the field' review for the countries in question.	Identifies and compares the issues and challenges for youth work in each country.	Partially disclosed.
2007	Evidence of the impact of the positive youth development model on outcomes for young people: A literature review	Schulman, S. and Davies, T.	Main focus is the UK but draws on literature from Australia, New Zealand and the USA	Combines conceptual synthesis and evidence review	Reviews evidence for the efficacy of the positive youth development model and explores the main features of positive youth development for an English audience.	Not disclosed
2009 (-2014)	The history of youth work in Europe, Volumes 1 to 4	Coussée, F. et al.	Europe	Historical review	Comparative histories of youth work that cross borders of time, place policy and practice in order to better respond to and plan for contemporary developments.	Partially disclosed.
2010	Increasing the engagement of young people in positive activities	Adamson, J. and Poultney, J.	Australia, Canada UK, USA	Evidence review	Combines empirical evidence on participation in different kinds of 'positive activities' with a review of evidence of the impacts of participating in positive activities.	Fully disclosed.
2010	Youth work and 'youth at risk' in the Netherlands	Baillergeau, E. and Hoijtink, M.	The Netherlands	'Traditional' literature review and conceptual synthesis, combined with 'state of the field' analysis	Gives a general outline of youth work in the Netherlands. Details the emergence of 'marginalised youth' as target for youth work. Comments on the lack of joined-up knowledge in youth work and current trends in the Netherlands.	No
2010	The impact of youth work for young people: A systematic review	Fouché, C et al.	Australia and New Zealand	Systematic Review	Takes a systematic review approach to assessing the impacts of youth work in Au and Nz.  Based on the rigour of the evidence deemed necessary the result was an 'empty review'.	Fully disclosed.

2010	The benefits of youth work	McKee, V Oldfield, C. and Poultney, J.	The United Kingdom	Evidence Review	Reviews the available evidence on the positive outcomes of youth work provision in the UK. Produced on behalf of public sector trade union Unite. Includes academic and grey literature	No
2013	Youth work: A systematic map of the research literature	Dickson, K., Vigurs, C.A. and Newman, M.	International ('High-income' countries only)	Scoping review	Classified and described the international evidence base addressing the impacts and outcomes of youth work.	Yes
2014	Working with young people: The value of youth work in the European Union	Dunne, A. et al.	Europe (with separate country reports)	Combination of conceptual review and evidence review	Brings together evidence in order to 'facilitate the understanding and appreciation of youth work'.  Combines country reports on the state of the field with respect to policy drivers and funding.  Provides a conceptual synthesis and couples case study research with evidence review regarding impacts and outcomes.	No

# APPENDIX 2 TABLES OF DATA SOURCES SEARCHED

**TABLE 1 DATABASES SEARCHED FOR ACADEMIC JOURNAL ARTICLES**

Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA)
Education Source
Emerald Insight
Education Research Information Centre (ERIC)
GenderWatch
Humanities International Complete
JSTOR
The Knowledge Network
Medline
Physical education index
Proquest education (search results cover the Australian Education Index as well as the British Education Index).
Proquest Social Services Abstracts
PsychInfo
Race Relations Abstracts
Scopus Science Direct
Social Care Institute of Excellence's Social Care Online
Sociological abstracts
Social Sciences Citation Index
Web of Science

**TABLE 2 YOUTH WORK-RELATED WEBSITES HAND SEARCHED BETWEEN JULY-SEPTEMBER 2014**

Ara Taiohi: For people working with young people website
Children and Young People Now website
Children in Scotland website
Choose Youth website
Contemporary Community Education Practice and Theory (CONCEPT) website
Current Education and Children's Services Research website
In Defence of Youth Work blog
Independent Action blog
Infed website
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services website
National Youth Agency website
Professional Open Youth Work in Europe website
Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations website
Ultimate Youth Worker blog
Young Foundation website

Young Minds website
Youth Affairs Network Queensland website
Youth Link Scotland website
Youth Sector blog
Youthpolicy website

### **TABLE 3 GREY LITERATURE DATABASES CONSULTED**

The International Society for Third Sector Research
Open Grey
Social Policy and Social Work Subject Centre
System for Information on Grey Literature (SIGLE): bibliographic database covering European non-conventional literature in social sciences and humanities (1974–present)
Third Sector Knowledge Portal: A depository of 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector research produced in the UK
UNESCO Online materials