

University of  
South Wales  
Prifysgol  
De Cymru

# Why young people and youth work are important in dealing with youth unemployment.....?

**NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION  
JOINT VISION - YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN SERBIA**

Belgrade, Serbia

22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015

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# Personal roots and routes

## ‘Youth work’ practice 45+ years

Open club-based work, street-based work

Teaching and examining on professional training courses

## Youth research 35+ years

Offending, training and unemployment, enterprise, substance misuse, homelessness, mental health and learning disability, public care, labour market recruitment

## Youth policy 25+ years

Youth work, alcohol and substance misuse, youth training, social inclusion, youth justice, curriculum reform, volunteering, safeguarding and advocacy  
**Wales, UK, EU, Council of Europe, other countries**

# Youth and community work

- The work of the Ely Youth and Community Project (*Strategies for Intervention; Co-operation, Confusion, Collapse*)
- Active learning in practice: what does youth work do?
- The Lifechance project (*Social Action for Young People*)
- Curriculum in Context: youth work in Wales
- The needs of young people aged 15-19
- Young people, the youth service and transitions
- Experiential learning through the outdoors [*Madzinga*]
- The work of the Helsinki Youth Department (*The Wonderful World of Youth Work*)
- [*The history of youth work in Europe Vols 1-4; Vol 5*]
- **1979-1997 Vice-Chair/Chair, Birmingham Young Volunteers**
- **1976 – present Member, Grassroots Management Committee**
- **1988-1991 Chair, Wales Youth Work Partnership**
- **1991-2006 Vice-Chair/Chair, Wales Youth Agency**
- **2010- present Champion, National Citizen Service**
- **2014- present Member, Youth Work Reference Group, Welsh Govt**

# Education and Training

- The ethos of an open access FE college
- Job/skills analysis (*A triangle of misunderstanding*)
- Mini-enterprise in schools project (*Education for enterprise and entrepreneurship*)
- Regional development & vocational training
- Phoenix Co-operatives (*Out of the Ashes of Redundancy*)
- Gender equality in education
- Schools and the community: service learning
- Learning through an alternative curriculum (*Attendance, Attitude and Achievement*)
- The police-schools liaison programme (*Realism, Relevance & Respect*)
- **1997-2001 UK Parliamentary adviser on education**

# Youth unemployment

- Role of the Youth Opportunities Programme (*Out of School: the role of government training schemes*)
- Employers' recruitment and training strategies (*Employers' recruitment and training strategies*)
- Disadvantaged youth in the labour market
- Business start-up in rural areas
- Training for enterprise: young people & autonomy (*Training for Enterprise*)
- The 'status zero' studies [later termed 'NEET's'] (*Young people not in education, training or employment*)
- Mapping 'disaffected' youth

- **1978-88 Youth Opportunity Development Unit advisory panel**
- **1998-2004 UK govt New Deal Task Force Advisory Committee**
- **2012-2014 Auditor General for Wales review of 'NEET's**

**1960s**

*The Insecure Offenders*

*The Unattached*

*Working with Unattached Youth*

## 1970s

1973 Manpower Services Commission

1976 *Young people and work*

First governmental programmes to combat youth unemployment

Social and life skills training

Youth Opportunities Programme

*From social education to social and life skills*

Motivation Courses/Western Multiservices

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## 1980s

“The most advanced set of youth training proposals ever set before Parliament”

Youth Training Scheme

Peter Morrison’s threat to youth work

Enterprise education - MESP (1986)

For, through and about

Initiative v. compliance – skills for work

Youth entrepreneurship

The 4<sup>th</sup> side of the triangle

Youth Training guarantee (1988)

Ministerial Conferences on the Youth Service (1989–1992)



## 1990s

*Status Zer0 youth* (from 1996: 'NEET')

Outreach and detached youth work

Retention and re-inclusion programmes  
(youth work methodologies?)

Youth access initiative / Relaunch

Social inclusion agenda: *Bridging the  
Gap*

Youth work and schools partnership  
programme (in Wales) [EOTAS]

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**“The can't do, won't do service”**

## 2000s

*Policy Action Team 12 – Young People*

*Connexions (England)*

*Extending Entitlement (Wales)*

*Transforming Youth Work*

*Resourcing Excellent Youth Services*

Increasing expectation of youth work to contribute to formal learning, training and 'employability'

## 2010s

*'Positive for Youth'*

Destruction of municipal 'open' youth work

Targeting the most disadvantaged

**National Citizen Service / Step Up To Serve**

Inclusion of young people who are 'NEET'

Outcome-focused youth work

**Engagement and Progression**

Proactive, not reactive youth work.....

2015 – Youth obligation: **Boot camps for the jobless young** [youth work ignored]

# Youth work & youth unemployment

*Youth work (non-formal learning) and formal education, training and employment – an uneasy, often unclear relationship*

Youth work as an **independent** actor

Youth work as a **partner**

Youth work as a **servant**/slave

Youth work as **irrelevant**

# Understanding youth perspectives – an underpinning pre-requisite for effective intervention, support, guidance and direction

*Aspirations and orientations*

*Qualitative classifications*

*An holistic picture*

# Aspirations and orientations

From YOP's *Chance would be a fine thing*

To the status zero research on *Policy possibilities and problematics*

'Alternative  
ways of  
living'

Specific  
occupational  
focus

General  
occupational  
rejection

Ideological  
hostility to  
'opportunity'

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Questions of (ir)relevance and meaning(lessness)

# Qualitative classifications

Essentially confused

Temporarily sidetracked

Deeply alienated – purposeful/purposeless

# An holistic picture

## [New Deal for the Most Disadvantaged]

Backgrounds

Characteristics

Attitudes

Dependencies



# Youth work as a precursor and a partner

Knowledge and Understanding

Practice and Brokerage/Advocacy

*Personal change prior to positional change*

# Six critical questions for research and policy re. social inclusion

