



Youthreach

Beneficiaries

Early leavers from education and training

Young people Unemployed youth Vulnerable groups

15-20 year old unemployed early school leavers who dropped out of second level education before completing either lower or upper secondary education.

Countries

 Ireland

Education level and sector

Secondary education

Lower secondary education

Upper secondary education

Lower or upper secondary education offering qualifications at ISCED levels 2 and 3.

Type of policy/initiative

Compensation

Compensation

Level of implementation / Scope

National level

National

Stage of implementation

On-going

Ongoing since 1989

Aims of policy/initiative

Reduce early leaving and educational disadvantage and encourage young adults to return to school and complete their studies.

Features and types of activities implemented

Each Youthreach centre is responsible for developing programmes and courses that meet the needs of their particular learner group.

The curriculum includes 3 main elements:

- general education
- vocational training
- work experience

The curriculum's framework is delivered through 2 main programmes:

- the Leaving Certificate Applied
- Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) accredited modules

The process used is both student-centred and student-led and the programmes reflect the students' needs.

The Department for Education and Studies' (stakeholder) guidelines drafted in 2010 specify a four-phase plan for students including:

- induction - needs are identified and a plan is laid out
- foundation - development of skills
- progression - emphasis on employability skills and work experience
- transitions - to progress onwards from the programme

Resources

SOLAS - Further Education and Training Authority allocates funding for the Youthreach programme to Education and Training Boards (ETBs) who operate Youthreach centres in their region.

Evaluation of the measure

The Department for Education and Studies (DES) evaluated the measure in 2010, focusing on management quality, the provision of planning and education, and the ethos in the 25 centres evaluated.

Methodology included observations of practice in the centres and classrooms, and analysis of programme questionnaires and student data forms completed by each centre for the evaluation.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

The evaluation did not examine effectiveness.

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. The student-staff relationship at the heart of the programme: this is paramount and works to restore trust in pedagogical relationships, which for many of these students have been severely compromised in the standard schooling system. This relationship should be one of mutual respect and entail a sense of equality. Students interviewed have cited the respect and the strong feeling of acceptance from Youthreach centre staff as key to their enjoyment, commitment, attendance and performance at Youthreach.
2. Flexibility in programme implementation (e.g. differentiated teaching styles, ability to extend an individual's stay on the programme) and the types of activities, for example, career assessment activities: flexibility ensures maximal responsiveness to the particular learning and personal needs of individual students. Participants mentioned career guidance and counselling provision on the programme as contributing factors to their sense of direction and optimism for the future. Central to this is the fact that the teacher/ trainer and student draw up an 'individual learning plan' together which allows the student to better know and understand his specific learning and progression options.
3. Smaller education settings (i.e. keeping student numbers small): *the staff is more able to address problems that students bring to them in a smaller educational setting. Participants in this measure experience significantly greater support needs and, in a bigger educational setting, they run the risk of 'getting lost in the crowd'*, which may result in their exit or underachievement of the programme. Even

with resources increased proportionately to the number of students, the approach's quality is harder to maintain as the size (in terms of student numbers) grows.

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