

SCREEN AGERS INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT

USING ICT, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUTH WORK

SURVEY
RESPONDENTS



FOCUS
GROUPS



1,865

PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH
THE PROJECT

CASE
STUDIES



YOUNG
PEOPLE



INFOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM
AUSTRIA, DENMARK, FINLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND
AND THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

AIM

TO EXPLORE THE EXTENT, VALUE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE USE OF ICT, SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA AS A TOOL IN YOUTH WORK, AND TO PROVIDE AN EVIDENCE-BASE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ICT IN YOUTH WORK AT ORGANISATIONAL, NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVELS.

“Begin talking about online ethics and behaviour online as early as possible - you should not just talk about it when it goes wrong.”

Youth Worker,
DENMARK

“Young people are increasingly engaging with new technologies and digital media. There is clearly a role for online youth work practice, in terms of exploiting a new space for youth work in a meaningful way, supporting digital literacy and enabling young people to deal with some of the associated risks. The practice implications for youth workers lie in new competencies required and new forms of boundary maintenance in relationships with young people.”

Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention,
BRUSSELS, APRIL 2015

RESEARCH PARTNERS

THE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
COUNCIL OF
IRELAND

VERKE
(FINLAND)

CENTRE
FOR DIGITAL
YOUTH CARE
(DENMARK)

THE YOUTH
COUNCIL
FOR
NORTHERN
IRELAND

WIENXTRA
(AUSTRIA)

The National Youth Council of Ireland was the lead partner for the project.

Screenagers is a collaborative international research project focussing on the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work. This project is a response to a need identified within the youth work sector at the Screenagers International seminar in 2014 which took place in Dublin. It is a partnership between agencies in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The project is funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme.

FIND OUT MORE

See the complete international report as well as national reports from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on youth.ie/screenagers

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ?

1 STRATEGIC FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

IN INFRASTRUCTURE, HARDWARE, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT



2 MEETING THE IDENTIFIED TRAINING NEEDS

OF YOUTH WORKERS AT ALL LEVELS, FROM INTRODUCTORY BASIC SKILLS TRAINING TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BESPOKE COURSES, AND WITH A FOCUS ON THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF SKILLS



3 CHALLENGE RESISTANT MIND-SETS

AND SUPPORT A FULLER AND MORE CREATIVE USE OF ICT IN YOUTH WORK



4 ENSURING POLICY COMMITMENT

WITHIN YOUTH WORK SECTORS



5 WRITTEN GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH WORKERS

LAYING OUT PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE AND DEMONSTRATING IMPACT, WHICH COULD BE SUPPORTED THROUGH NATIONAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND/OR THROUGH NATIONAL CHAMPIONS FOR ICT IN YOUTH WORK



OVER
3/4 OF YOUTH WORKERS → USE SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA IN THEIR WORK DAILY

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
77%

NORTHERN IRELAND
80%

AUSTRIA
90%

FINLAND
94%

DENMARK
94%

“[We know] young adults to be competent users of media, who could nevertheless still know more.”

Study Participants,
AUSTRIA

HOW ICT IS USED IN YOUTH WORK

“Youth work values are what’s most important, and then we build the technology around that: It’s less about building technical skills and more about being a tool to express themselves.”

Youth Worker,
NORTHERN IRELAND

The most common use for social and digital media in Youth Work was communication and information purposes with young people and colleagues.

Partners found that usage was often unidimensional in purpose, and that the fuller, more creative, potential of social media had not been realised on a wide scale across the youth sectors.

The case studies and information provided during focus groups illustrate that, where ICT is being used in creative and innovative ways, it offers a versatile and powerful tool to support youth work.

If youth work fails to embrace the use of technology and social media there is a risk of becoming outdated and irrelevant to young people who use youth work services. Youth work has the opportunity to fill the gaps which sometimes occur within the home and school in supporting young people to understand technology and the risks that might be involved.



FINLAND

48% OF YOUTH WORKERS



FELT THAT THEY LACKED PERSONAL COMPETENCE IN DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA



WHAT ICT CONTRIBUTES TO YOUTH WORK



Digital media often complements other activities. Northern Ireland's survey results showed that social and digital media was rated as 'highly effective' or 'effective' by the majority of respondents in terms of supporting citizenship, life skills and thinking skills, and participation and advocacy.

Findings from Finland highlighted that the use of digital media offers young people new experiences and learning opportunities, and the chance to experience success. ICT has made communication with young people easier and more immediate, while using contemporary young-person accessible ways (Finland and Austria).

Excellent models of best practice taking place in the youth work sector in Ireland are demonstrated in a wide range of youth work programmes, including youth health, youth advocacy and campaigning and development education. It also forms an integral part of a young person's critical thinking skills and reinforces the model of 'learning by doing.'

DENMARK

79% OF YOUTH WORKERS



CONSIDER ICT AND MEDIA AS
VALUABLE & EFFICIENT TOOLS
IN THEIR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

"I would like to see [...] everyone equally well-trained and shown that it's easy and genuinely fun and useful."

Youth Worker,
FINLAND

CHALLENGES

**'If we do this,
we should do it
properly.'**

Youth Worker,
FINLAND

A very common challenge across all countries participating in the study has been a perceived or actual deficit in media skills.

Another challenge which has been highlighted through the study is insufficient and a lack of ICT equipment.

Funding constraints were highlighted as a barrier in accessing adequate equipment and availing of relevant ICT training to support and enhance the use of social and digital media in their work.

All countries have identified a lack of infrastructure, stating that governmental and organisational guidelines are often lacking and that youth workers have requested more frameworks and strategic direction in how to use technology to support their youth work.

It was highlighted that there needs to be a changing of mind-sets amongst some of the policy makers and funders in order to truly embrace the technological world young people are growing up in.

NORTHERN
IRELAND

YOUNG
PEOPLE ARE

OVERWHELMINGLY

POSITIVE

ABOUT TECHNOLOGY
AND THE INTERNET

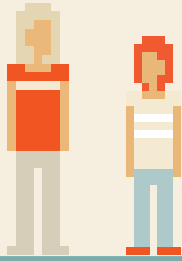


WITH

75%

STATING
THEY

→ **'COULD NOT LIVE
WITHOUT THE INTERNET'**



TRAINING

In general, there was a willingness from participants in the study across all five partners to engage in training including learning about latest digital developments, how to use ICT to enhance youth work, producing media related resources such as film making, copyright issues and using digital games.

AUSTRIA

69% OF RESPONDENTS SAY THAT MEDIA IS **AN ESSENTIAL PART** OF TEENAGE LIFE AND

THEREFORE YOUTH WORK ALSO SHOULD ENGAGE WITH MEDIA

92% HIGHLIGHT THE POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL MEDIA **TO ENHANCE YOUTH WORK METHODS**

IRELAND

ONLY **24%** HAD RECEIVED **TRAINING** ON THE USE OF SOCIAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA



“[we aim to] encourage young people to become creators of digital media rather than consumers and that they question the media that is there in front of their eyes.”

Youth Worker,
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



FIND OUT MORE

See the complete international report as well as national reports from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland on youth.ie/screenagers

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The Screenagers International Research Project is a collaborative study focussing on the use of ICT, digital and social media in youth work. It is a partnership between agencies in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Finland, Austria and Denmark.



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