

ENGAGING YOUTH ENQUIRY

New Approaches to Engaging Youth: Understanding the problems and implementing the solutions

July 2007 – October 2008

Briefing Paper

September 2007

Aims of the Enquiry

The Engaging Youth Enquiry, a collaboration between the Nuffield 14-19 Review and Rathbone, aims to:

- Develop a better understanding of the young people who are the targets of the current policy to reduce the so-called 'NEET' figures: Who are they? Why do they leave the education and training system early? What are **their** aspirations and what do they see as **their** needs?
- Identify effective types of intervention and understand why they work in collaboration with practitioners and young people.
- Work with providers and policy makers to develop suggestions for practice and how these can best be supported by national and local policy.

Workshops and themes

The Rathbone/Nuffield enquiry will gather evidence from a variety of sources, through workshops and discussions with young people, practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

Discussions with groups of young people in different regions of the country will take place in order to find out more about their views. These will have an open agenda, allowing the young people to focus on the issues of greatest importance to them. In September 2008, there will be a mini-conference bringing together the young people who participated in the workshops in the different locations for a larger workshop in London.

The workshops with practitioners will be structured around four sets of questions, outlined below:

The life circumstances of young people

Workshop in Manchester, 1 Nov 2007

- What is known about the characteristics, shared as well as diverse, of young people who are classified as 'NEET'?
- What can we learn from case histories of young people who are outside education, employment and training or in jobs without training?
- What kinds of strategies for supporting these young people are successful?
- What is the role of voluntary sector organisations in supporting these young people?

Learning and work opportunities

Workshop in Cardiff, 29 Feb 2008

- What is the impact of the complexity of the education and training systems in England and Wales on these young people?
- What kinds of learning opportunity should be made available to motivate and engage these young people?
- What are their employment aspirations?
- What role do employers currently play?



Rathbone participants

Young and a 'NEET' statistic in London

Workshop in London, Mar 2008

- This workshop will discuss collected issues of life circumstances, learning and work opportunities and policy implications.

The regional perspective

Workshop in Northumberland, May 2008

- What are the effects of regional variation?
- To what extent can effective collaboration between stakeholders in a particular context provide solutions for young people outside education, employment and training, or in jobs without training?
- What role do local employers play?
- What is the impact of local and regional employment and work structures?

Policy implications

Workshop in Oxford, 2 Jul 2008

- How is the issue of engaging youth articulated in the policy discourse?
- How does current policy relate to the current situation?
- What are the policy implications of the current situation?
- Priorities and recommendations

The launch of the Engaging Youth Enquiry

This 15-month enquiry was launched at Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament, on 3rd July 2007. The enquiry will end with an event at the House of Commons to report on the findings in September 2008. Speakers at the launch included:

- Barry Sheerman MP
- Sir Michael Bichard, Chair of Trustees, Rathbone
- Dr Geoff Hayward, Director, Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training
- John Fox, Advanced Skills Teacher
- Susan Walker, Manager, Manchester West Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP)
- Aminul Hoque, Training Adviser, Rathbone
- Dr Richard Williams, Chief Executive, Rathbone



Geoff Hayward, Nuffield Review



Richard Williams, Rathbone

The papers given by practitioners (Fox, Walker and Hoque) highlighted many of the areas the Engaging Youth Enquiry will focus on in the next 15-months. These included:

The diversity of experience of the young people and their range of needs

Walker pointed out that 9% of those on ISSP had attempted suicide, 15% were deliberately self-harming, 36% were living with known offenders and 15% were of no fixed abode; while Hoque highlighted the high drug, crime, unemployment and overcrowding rates in Tower Hamlets, as well as the poor schooling and local facilities and language issues.

Prior experience of learning

Fox pointed out the need for alternative types of provision, away from the traditions and constraints of the formal curriculum. This included examples from the Skidz project, based in the West Midlands. Walker showed that the young people on ISSP had an average reading age 5½ years below their actual age – the average age is 16 with the average reading age being 10½. Hoque commented on the cultural issues for black and minority ethnic learners in Tower Hamlets that make it more difficult for them to engage with the curriculum.

Importance of context

All three practitioner speakers highlighted the need to respect the young people's life contexts.

Self-esteem and confidence

All three practitioners also focused on the need to allow young people to build up their self-esteem and confidence, which may have suffered because of a school and/or family experience based on the perception of their own failure.

Guidance

The young people may well have aspirations of a very precise nature, but help is required to support them in achieving those aspirations. This includes work of a practical nature – Hoque mentioned guiding young people in Tower Hamlets to produce their CVs ('these CVs are like a degree to these young people') – as well as enhancing their self-esteem and self-confidence in general.

Invitation to submit evidence and comments

Rathbone and the Nuffield Review will hold the Engaging Youth Enquiry as an open forum, and invite submissions of evidence or comments from young people, practitioners, researchers and all interested parties. The Enquiry welcomes comments on the reports and working papers it produces, and aims to involve as many people, from as many areas of expertise, as possible. Please send any evidence and comments to engaging_youth_enquiry@education.ox.ac.uk



Launch of Engaging Youth Enquiry, Portcullis House

Engaging Youth Enquiry: This collaboration between Rathbone and the Nuffield Review reflects their joint interest in analysing the current situation regarding persistently high numbers of young people outside employment, education and training, and in searching for positive, pragmatic and long-term solutions, based on their shared belief that every young person has the ability to learn, to make progress and to achieve.