

Proposal for a Partnership with *youngballymun* to Plan and Evaluate an Adolescent Mental Health Effort

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Introduction

Youngballymun is an initiative of the Ballymun Development Group for Children and Young People whose mission is:

“...that all children and young people will flourish and be happy; will live in nurturing families, be healthy and emotionally strong; will be educated and equipped to reach their own ambitions; will be confident, motivated, and involved in their community; and [will live] in an enjoyable physical environment which is safe and secure.”

Launched in the autumn of 2006, *youngballymun* represents a ten-year strategy to improve the health and well-being of the children and young people in the Ballymun community. There are several components to the initiative, most of which are designed for younger children and their families. Focusing on the pre-natal and early years (0-4), programmes such as an adaptation of the *Nurse Family Partnership*, *High/Scope*, and *Community Mothers* are underway. With respect to the school-age population, *The Incredible Years* and *Experience Corp* programmes are to be implemented. The present proposal focuses on planning and evaluation of an emerging adolescent health and mental health effort.

Located in north Dublin, Ballymun is a community comprised of four electoral districts with an estimated child and adolescent population (ages 0-18) of 2,500. Recent studies of prevalence and need (CSER, 2006¹; McKeown & Haase, 2006²) documented in detail a range of problems evident within this community, including lone parenthood, economic disadvantage, unemployment, crime, drug and alcohol use, early school leaving, and mental health difficulties. Among other findings, it was estimated that at least 20% of the young people in Ballymun may require mental health intervention.

Headstrong – The National Centre for Youth Mental Health has been asked to propose a planning and evaluation system in support of this programme. Consistent with *youngballymun*, the goals of *Headstrong* are to:

- Promote better integration between multiple services and disciplines to provide better, more rounded care to young people
- Develop the skills and confidence of the youth mental health workforce (youth workers, general practitioners, psychiatrists, counsellors, etc.) enabling them to provide best in class care for young people
- Enhance mental health literacy amongst young people and the wider community
- Reduce public stigma about mental health problems
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of this new model of youth mental health care, providing the evidence and impetus for further support and investment

¹ Center for Social and Educational Research. (2006). *Ballymun needs analysis: Final report*. Dublin 1: Dublin Institute of Technology.

² McKeown, K., & Haase, T. (2006). *The mental health of children and the factors which influence it: A study of families within Ballymun*. Dublin 9: Kieran McKeown Limited.

Perspectives on Planning and Evaluation³

In general, research and evaluation strategies serve various purposes. Traditional research paradigms are primarily concerned with the generation of scholarly knowledge regarding the effects of a specified intervention on one or more dependent variables. Unfortunately, such approaches often rely on a degree of experimental control not available in natural settings or service delivery programmes. Another common purpose of research and evaluation is to inform policy-makers and funders (e.g., Atlantic Philanthropies) of programme effectiveness. Finally, evaluative research is concerned with informing programme managers about important programmatic processes and outcomes.

The second and third goals, informing policy makers/funders, and informing programme managers, receive the greatest emphasis in the present evaluation plan. In this context, programme evaluation is seen as a set of rigorous methods that can enable programme managers to have available technically adequate and socially valid (i.e., relevant) information about programme processes and outcomes. The availability of such information leads to more sound decision-making at multiple levels of the programme as it evolves. Thus, programme evaluation contributes to on-going development and improvement of the programme, in addition to helping reach formative and summative judgements (over time) about the success of the programme relative to its goals.

A primary purpose of the proposed evaluation plan is therefore to enable professionals responsible for implementation of the *youngballymun* adolescent mental health effort to gather, analyze, and interpret data to assess overall implementation and effectiveness. In general, information generated by the evaluation system will provide funders, community members, programme managers, and others with timely and relevant information about the extent to which the initiative is fulfilling its stated mission. Through a continuous and collaborative process of questioning, data development, analysis, discussion, and refinement, the planning and evaluation partnership between *Headstrong* and *youngballymun* will:

- generate useful management-oriented information that contributes to understanding about the problems adolescents in Ballymun experience;
- encourage the planning, development, and evaluation of a community-level initiative for young people that utilizes multi-level, integrated strategies and has the potential to demonstrate broad-based systems change within an evaluable format.
- promote the development and evaluation of targeted prevention and intervention activities that concentrate on risk and resilience factors for young people in Ballymun and emphasize social and behavioral competence.
- facilitate continuous quality improvement of programmes and practices in mental health and related areas by making available findings from research and evaluation,

³ A framework for conceptualizing the proposed system of planning and evaluation can be found in the appendix (one-page A4 sheet). If printer does not accommodate A5 printing, the last sheet can be printed on letter size paper using the “Scale to Paper Size” feature in MS Word (*Print, Scale to Paper Size, Letter*).

- and enabling more fine-grained research through the organization of data that can be displayed and understood by programme planners and administrators; and,
- enable the integration of programmes across the community in the service of teamwork, efficient resource allocation, and programme effectiveness.

In this context, principles that will guide our planning and evaluative efforts are as follows:

1. A continuity of thinking and empirical analysis should underlie both planning and evaluation processes, since in the evolution of a programme, both planning and evaluation involve decisions or judgments that must be made in response to core evaluative questions.
 - Needs identification – What evidence is available from a variety of sources that leads to the belief that there are unaddressed priority needs in the area of youth mental health? For what subpopulations or groups? To what extent?
 - Goal-setting – Given the current state of affairs with respect to an identified set of priority needs, what are the desired outcomes for programmatic intervention for a programme or initiative? How will success be recognized and measured? Which programme goals are oriented toward enabling change (service delivery goals), and which are intrinsic (outcome goals for young people)?
 - Programme design - What evidence-based interventions have been employed and validated elsewhere to address similar goals? What theory of change underlies the activities and strategies within these preventive interventions? Is a similar programme or strategy warranted in this instance? How will the intervention be organized and implemented?
 - Resource requirements and allocation - What human, financial, informational, and technological resources will be required to implement the programme?
 - Programme implementation – Who will be responsible for implementing the programme? What tasks and activities will be central to the successful implementation of the programme? How will we know whether the programme has been implemented as planned?
 - Outcome determination – To what extent has progress occurred toward needs reduction (goal attainment)? Which priority needs remain? What relationships between programme activities and outcomes can be delineated?
 - Understanding – What are the relationships between and among key variables within the programme? What works and does not work? Why or why not? What activities provide the most “return on investment”?
 - Refinement – How should programme activities be revised or strengthened? Is there evidence that the programme is efficient and effective? Should the programme be continued? Expanded? How can what has been learned from this programme contribute to understanding and continuous quality improvement in the service of overall systems change? How can these findings best be communicated to others?

2. In designing a comprehensive and integrated planning and evaluation system, perhaps the most fundamental activity to be conducted through the proposed partnership will be the generation of a clear and coherent set of evaluation questions that can serve to govern the nature and scope of information to be collected. At a minimum, evaluation questions should address issues of: (1) Who is being served (demographics, problems, issues)?; (2) What services are being delivered and to what extent?; (3) Is the programme being implemented as planned and with fidelity?; and, (4) What change or outcomes are associated with programme implementation (behavioral change, response prevention, satisfaction, knowledge, skill development)?
3. Planning and evaluation activities are only useful to the extent that they lead to better judgment and decision-making. The focus of the planning and evaluation partnership should be utilization-focused. That is, it should begin with the information needs of the consumers of the initiative, and orient questioning and data gathering around addressing issues that are relevant to these constituencies.
4. Effective planning and evaluation activities are best facilitated through the use of an on-going evaluation committee comprised of representative consumers of the “research”. The functions of this committee include generating questions, considering theoretical and practical issues, reviewing data gathering strategies, “breathing life” into raw data by facilitating proper interpretation, and insuring that data presentations are helpful and appropriate.
5. On a more general level, evaluative activities undertaken through this partnership will be conducted consistent with standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy:
 - Utility- The evaluation should serve the information needs of intended users.
 - Feasibility- The evaluation should be realistic, prudent, diplomatic, and frugal.
 - Propriety- The evaluation should be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as those affected by its results.
 - Accuracy- The evaluation should reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the programme being evaluated.

Plan and Timeframe for Partnership Implementation

No. of days	Timeframe/ Location	Start-Up and Year 1 Tasks	Staff Involved Headstrong/REACH
30	On- and off-site May - July 2007	Identify and collect sources of existing data on needs and characteristics of community <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review reports done in first 3 years of planning, seek to obtain raw data for more fine-grained analysis ii. Procure GIS Shape files (or x, y coordinates) for Ballymun and comparable or adjoining neighborhoods (Dublin North Central) iii. Contact administrators, advisory board members, county development board, HSE regional manager, child and adolescent team, and as many others as possible to identify existing data sources re: needs and resources and structure of existing system (including capacity of system and service delivery process) iv. Conduct internet/library research related to needs of adolescents in similar settings, results from other initiatives, evidence-based approaches v. Conduct research on specific strategies regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health promotion for younger adolescents • Enhancing the system of care for older adolescents 	Bob Illback (PI) Margaret Pennington Marsha Illback Conor MacPartlain Daniel Sanders Patrick Smith Amanda Kilmer Lisa Kauffmann Staff
9	July - August 2007	Develop interview protocol for use with key informants, procure ethics board approval	Bob Illback Staff
30	On-site Scheduled within 10 day period May - August 2007	Conduct individual meetings with key informants (approximately 20 depthful interviews with community and programme leaders, Advisory Board members, and a range of other key individuals within the community) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To understand their role in agency system b. To ascertain the process they use to access a mental health service for youth 	Bob Illback (lead), Daniel Sanders III Marsha Illback Patrick Smith Conor MacPartlain Lisa Kauffmann

		<p>or family (facilitators, barriers, workarounds)</p> <p>c. Assess community readiness for participation in/support of an interagency, community based initiative</p> <p>Conduct 3-4 focus group(s) with representative youth in Ballymun</p> <p>Conduct/facilitate organizational meetings of the adolescent project advisory board (with focus on programme planning)</p> <p>Identify a programme planning subcommittee</p> <p>Consult with other administrators and officials (e.g., CEO of Young Ballymun).</p> <p>On-going on-site coordination and consultation</p>	
15	<p>Off-site</p> <p>June – August 2007</p>	<p>Analyze and summarize findings, including description, graphs, charts, maps, including initial draft of problem statements</p> <p><i>INITIAL PRODUCT: Data Book and narrative description of current state of affairs regarding the community and the service delivery system; will use mapping to the degree possible</i></p>	<p>Bob Illback Margaret Pennnington Daniel Sanders III Marsha Illback Patrick Smith Conor MacPartlain Lisa Kauffmann Staff</p>
20	<p>On-site</p> <p>One or two full day meetings of planning group within 1 week period</p> <p>Early September 2007</p>	<p>Present findings to planning group and Advisory Board, modify if necessary based upon review/input.</p> <p>Solicit input for next phase of planning process:</p> <p>a. Refine and prioritize problem statements to focus project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements re: system • Statements re: youth • Statements re: community <p>b. Solicit statements from advisory group members regarding project goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System • Youth • Community <p>c. Solicit ideas from Advisory Board members regarding potential strategies for addressing problems and reaching goals; present research evidence from</p>	<p>Bob Illback Conor MacPartlain Daniel Sanders III Patrick Smith Marsha Illback</p>

		<p>review of literature</p> <p>d. Identify key representatives (HSE, Voluntary Youth sector, Education, Justice) who would be willing to review and give feedback on initial draft of programme plan through e-mail</p>	
12	<p>Off-site</p> <p>September 2007</p>	<p>Draft Strategic Plan</p> <p>a. Draft plan</p> <p>b. Solicit e-mail review of draft from designated representatives</p> <p>c. Make revisions in response to input</p> <p>PRODUCT: Strategic plan, including problem statements, strategies and short and long term goals.</p>	<p>Bob Illback</p> <p>Margaret Pennington</p> <p>Conor MacPartlain</p> <p>Daniel Sanders</p> <p>Marsha Illback</p> <p>Patrick Smith</p> <p>Lisa Kauffmann</p> <p>Amanda Kilmer</p> <p>Staff</p>
6	<p>On site</p> <p>One or two full day meetings within a 1 week period</p> <p>September – October 2007</p>	<p>Present draft strategic plan to planning subgroup, Advisory Board, and other constituencies/stakeholders</p> <p>Obtain agreement on plan and/or needed revisions</p> <p>Solicit input on implementation issues:</p> <p>a. Governance of new initiative</p> <p>b. Structure of new services (authority and location in new system)</p> <p>c. Target Population – description</p> <p>d. Referral Process</p> <p>e. of youth</p> <p>f. Strategies for enhancing interagency collaboration</p> <p>g. parameters for implementation time table</p>	<p>Bob Illback</p> <p>Patrick Smith</p> <p>Daniel Sanders III</p> <p>Lisa Kauffmann</p> <p>Marsha Illback</p>
10	<p>September – October 2007</p>	<p>Draft Implementation Plan</p> <p>a. Solicit e-mail review of draft from designated representatives</p> <p>b. Make revisions in response to input</p> <p>PRODUCT: Implementation Plan</p>	<p>Bob Illback</p> <p>Lisa Kauffmann</p> <p>Patrick Smith</p> <p>Marsha Illback</p>
5	<p>On site</p> <p>September – October 2007</p>	<p>Present draft implementation plan to Advisory Board and other constituencies/stakeholders</p> <p>Revisit project goals and identify evaluation</p>	<p>Bob Illback</p> <p>Daniel Sanders</p> <p>Marsha Illback</p> <p>Patrick Smith</p>

		<p>questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Process b. System c. Youth d. Community 	
<p>8</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Off-site</p> <p>September – October 2007</p>	<p>Research and develop instruments for data gathering</p> <p>Draft protocol, including timetable, for use of data gathering instruments</p> <p>Develop training on evaluation instruments and protocols</p> <p><i>PRODUCT: Evaluation Plan</i></p>	<p>Bob Illback Amanda Kilmer Lisa Kauffmann</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>On site</p> <p>October 2007</p>	<p>Present evaluation plan to planning group, Advisory Board, and other constituencies/stakeholders</p> <p>Train users on evaluation instruments</p>	<p>Bob Illback Patrick Smith Daniel Sanders Marsha Illback Lisa Kauffmann</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>On site</p>	<p>Manage and support evaluation process</p>	<p>On-site research assistant (TBD) Bob Illback Staff</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>On site</p>	<p>Quarterly monitoring/management Annual Report</p>	<p>Bob Illback On-site research assistant (TBD) Staff</p>

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget below delineates the cost of implementing the planning and evaluation system as described above over a five year period. It is “front-loaded” in that much higher level of service will be required to complete start-up planning activities.

Timeframe	Days of Service	Daily Rate ⁴	Cost
Year 1	200	€500	€100,000
Year 2	100	€500	€50,000
Year 3	100	€500	€50,000
Year 4	100	€500	€50,000
Year 5	100	€500	€50,000
Project Total	600	€2500	€300,000

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about *youngballymun*. We look forward to discussing this proposal further with you.

⁴ Note: Includes all costs, including travel, supplies, staffing, and support.

A Data-Based Planning & Evaluation Framework for the Young Ballymun Adolescent Mental Health Initiative

Clarification Phase

Problem identification

What preliminary indicators provide estimates as to the nature and scope of youth mental health problems in the Ballymun area ?

- Needs analysis data
- Prevalence study
- Anecdotes
- Incidents
- Newspaper stories
- Survey data
- Arrests, crime rate
- Treatment needs
- Hospital emergency room data
- School disciplinary records

Within what system or systems are these problems seen? How are these systems and problems inter-related?

- Individual
- Family
- School
- Workplace
- Neighborhood

Contextual analysis

What community and regional factors and issues contribute to or attenuate these problems?

- Population characteristics
- Geography
- Family characteristics
- Business and industry
- Employment and occupational characteristics
- Availability of services
- Educational attainment
- Poverty rate

What data do we have, how reliable and valid are they, and what further data is required in order to pinpoint and target the needs of our community?

- Focus groups
- Surveys & questionnaires

Who is concerned about these problems? Is there consensus about the need for intervention and change?

Needs determination

- Where does Ballymun stand in relation to various benchmarks?
- What is the current state of affairs? Desired state of affairs?
- What are the key areas that are in need of change? In what priority?
- What are our hypotheses about the factors in Ballymun that are most influencing the mental health of young people?
- What are the likely facilitators and barriers with respect to change?
- Is there consensus about the nature and scope of the problem?

Planning Phase

Goal formulation

What areas (systems, subsystems) are most in need of change? What magnitude change is required?

Over what timeframe is it reasonable to expect change to occur? What evidence would indicate that significant change has occurred (i.e., goals have been partially or fully attained)?

Which goals have priority? Is there a logical sequence among the goals?

Delineate a set of goal statements that are clear, coherent, and integrated for the systems and subsystems that are to be targeted for intervention.

Intervention planning

What kinds of prevention and intervention activities are suggested by the goal statements listed above?

- Brainstorming
- Logical analysis
- Site visitation
- Group discussion
- Literature review

What are the various solution alternatives (prevention approaches) available? What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of each? What data are available to reach judgments about the various solution alternatives?

- Pilot tests and simulations
- Empirical outcome studies
- Personal experiences
- Examination of descriptive literature

In order for a particular solution alternative to work, what features must it have?

- Theoretical soundness
- Clarity
- Comprehensiveness
- Dosage
- Internal consistency

Program development

What human, financial, information, and technical resources must be assembled to implement the prevention/intervention program?

- Program specification and description (logic modeling)
- Budgeting
- Program approval
- Pilots and simulations
- Materials, supplies, technology
- Information systems design
- Training
- Policies and procedures

How will the program be implemented? What organizational or community readiness factors need to be addressed? How will the program be managed?

Implementation Phase

Assessing extent of implementation

Were staff trained to criterion level?

What services were delivered? To whom?

- Information system archival data
- Observation
- Records review
- Review of logs or written reports

How are participant groups involved in the program? Are they satisfied with the manner in which services are delivered?

- Checklists
- Rating scales
- Observation
- Focus groups

Were resources expended as intended?

- Budgets
- Time and effort analysis

Are there any discrepancies between what was planned and what occurred? Are these consequential?

Assessing program fidelity

What are the essential features of the program associated with the theoretical model?

Were the core features of the program implemented as planned?

Are methods and materials being employed as intended?

Were policies and procedures followed?

- Case studies
- Profiling of participation
- Purposeful and intensity sampling

Examining program utilization

What developmental stage of implementation does the program seem to be in?

Innovation configuration map

Assessment of stage of development

- Orientation and preparation
- Mechanical use
- Routine use
- Refinement
- Integration
- Renewal

Examination of facilitators and barriers to implementation

Thematic analysis of process content (focused exploration)

Examining exemplars and outliers

Outcomes Phase

Evidence of needs reduction and change

To what extent have goals been attained?

- Visual inspection
- Descriptive analysis
- Inferential analysis
- Magnitude analysis

What other program-related effects are in evidence?

How do program participants perceive program effectiveness?

Has the program been cost-efficient? Cost-effective?

Understanding the elements of change

What are the relationships (correlations) between and among key variables within the program? Within which systems?

- Data exploration
- Cross-tabulation
- Graphing and charting
- Correlational studies
- Factor and cluster analysis
- Outlier analysis
- Multiple regression

Can evidence be derived that lends support to inferences about cause-effect relationships?

- Randomized, controlled experiments
- Quasi-experimental designs
- Multivariate analysis
- Modeling of data
- Regression designs
- Contrast group designs
- Before- and after-studies
- Retrospective before- and after-studies
- Time-series analysis
- Cross-sectional surveys
- Judgmental assessments

Formative and summative decision-making

Reporting of evaluation findings

Stakeholder discussion and analysis

Meta-evaluation

Dissemination and diffusion

Adoption and adaptation