



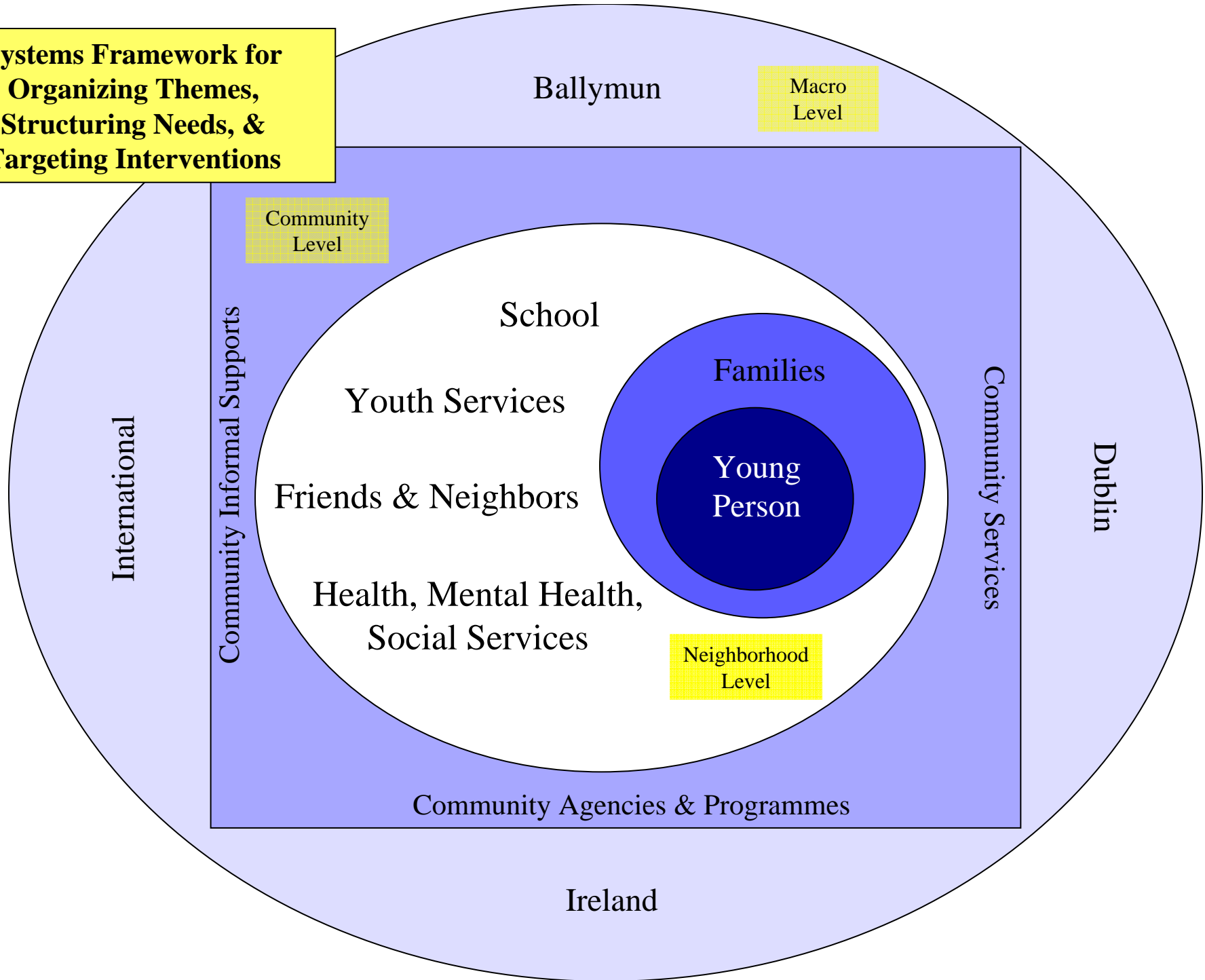
Needs and Resources Assessment: The Qualitative Data

***youngballymun* Youth Well-Being
Design Group**

Some Initial Points

- Review and discuss themes in an organized way
- Arrive at coherent set of needs statements to focus program design
- Not the time for problem-solving or suggesting solutions
- Most of the challenges not Ballymun-specific (but magnified)
- Start with conceptual framework to organize ideas & themes
- So far, data has been “objective” and quantitative
- Qualitative information is by definition quite personal (“breathes life” into data)
- Many will have strong (sometimes conflicting) opinions
- Multiple perspectives on causes, correlates, and consequences
- Importance of open, blame-free discussion
- Create an environment for safe conversation, exercise tolerance, respectful listening

**Systems Framework for
Organizing Themes,
Structuring Needs, &
Targeting Interventions**

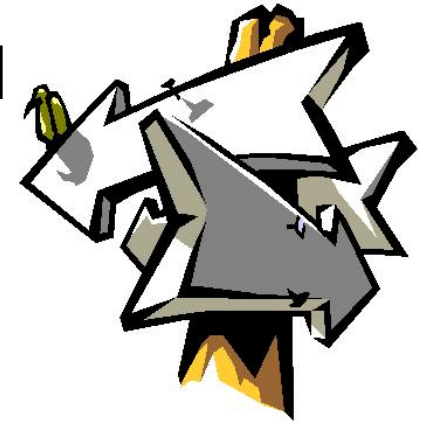




THEMES

International/National Influences

- Changing population demographic in Ireland (multi-cultural)
- Religious institutions & spirituality
- “Celtic Tiger” - Economic “lock-out”
- Pressures to succeed (money, jobs, clothing) – not necessarily school achievement
- International (American) media – images of success & style



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The Built Environment

- Much new housing and infrastructure completed
- Prospect of many infrastructure improvements (e.g., IKEA), but limited commercial businesses & shoppes
- Physical safety in a construction zone
- Construction delays & associated uncertainties
- Communication breakdowns and conflict about moves, policies, procedures
- Social class conflicts around housing & investment
- Diminished usable space overall
- Empty flats & building sites as places to “hang out”
 - More difficult to surveill



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The Sociological Environment

- Sense of rich community history and tradition
- Pride of place
- Losing connections with neighbors, breakdown of social networks (social capital), effect on norms and standards
- Problems associated with urbanicity & poor neighborhoods
 - Unemployment
 - Poverty
 - Crime & delinquency
 - Lone parents
 - Substance abuse
 - Transience
- Foreign Nationals moving into community (e.g., Poles, Lithuanians)
- Pervasive stigma



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The Psychological Environment

- Sense of connectedness, familiarity, identity
- Many adults feel hopeful and positive about changes (housing, services, opportunities)
- Young people not as hopeful about future
- Generalized fear – illness, crime, uncertainty
- Historical distrust of institutions & agencies, self-advocacy
- Social isolation, self-isolating
- Self-imposed psychological boundaries
- Numbness (death, violence, prominent incidents)
- Learned helplessness
- Anxiety due to uncertainty



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Community Services

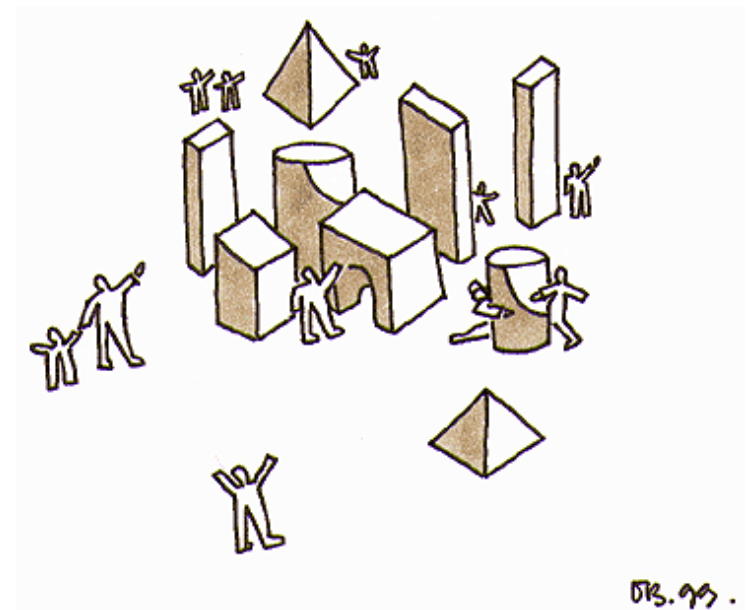
- Much has come on line – Civic Centre, clinics, pool, AXIS, neighborhood centres
- Much still under construction, in design stage, under discussion
- Service areas that are of greatest concern/conflict
 - Housing
 - Shopping
 - Neighborhood centres
 - Garda
 - BRL/DCC
- Community coalitions



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Community Agencies & Programmes

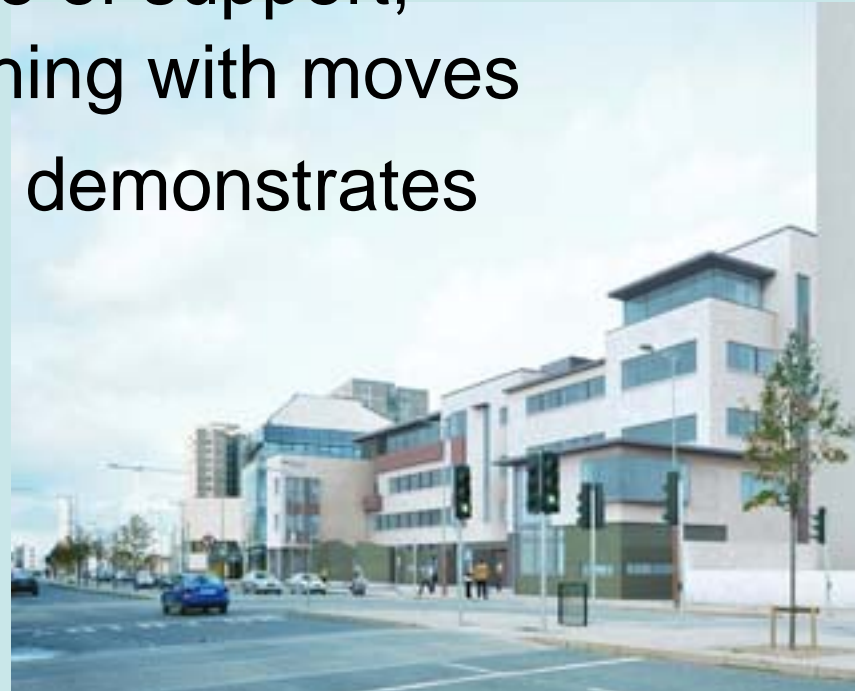
- Over 160 agencies and organizations
(*See Large Map*)
- Problems with service integration & coordination
- The Network as a cross-cutting approach to service integration
- Remaining challenges of access
- Service displacement (physical location)
- Lack of child care



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Community Supports

- Generous and giving culture
- Strong sense of identity
- Broader perspective on family structure
- Informal networks major source of support, although social capital diminishing with moves
- Advocacy is healthy response, demonstrates concern for one another



Schools & Schooling

- Schools as therapeutic milieu – safe harbour, normalcy
- School as setting for social inclusion and integration
- School attendance
- School discipline
- Standards for achievement
- Supports for teachers
- Building trust with the community
- Teacher-student interaction (culture, communication)
- Teacher “burn-out”
- Parent involvement in schools
- Need for special educational services
- Need for mental health services in schools
(or greater access)



Youth, Social, & Recreational Services

- Numerous innovative programmes & initiatives providing opportunities
- Examples include (by no means limited to):
 - BRYR (7 program components)
 - Aisling
 - Arts, Music, Photography
 - Geraldstown House
 - Women's Resource Centre
 - Youth Action Project
 - Best
 - Drugs Task Force
 - Kickhams GAA
 - BALLARC
- Outreach programmes, use of community members for outreach
- Some programmes serve low numbers due to intensity, resources
- Less youth-generated clubs and organizations
- Limited playgrounds, pitches, organized sports and recreation programmes, unfinished youth centres



Health, Mental Health, Social Services

- High level of concern, recognition of challenges, talented staff
- Overwhelmed by needs, demand, bureaucracy
- Some innovation underway in N. Dublin (e.g., Working Things Out, PBS)
- Reluctance to enter facility, no shows, lack of followup
- Parental cooperation – permission, bringing, supporting
- Stigma about accepting help, vocabulary about mental health
- Medicalised – “overmedicated, undercounselled”
- Effectiveness and carry-over of traditional approaches (therapy)
- Challenges of outreach and follow-up
- Connecting - understanding uniqueness of community and experiences of young people
- Challenges of sharing information at case and program levels
- No overnight or weekend services, lack of emergency supports
- Lack of integration and communication across services
- Access, access, access

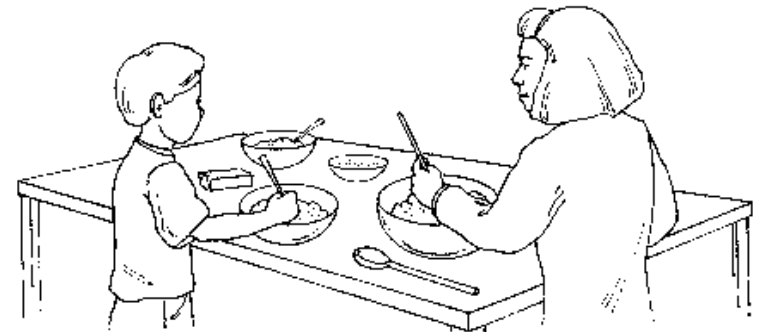
Influences of Friends & Neighbors

- **Strong bonds and community identification**
- **Need for responsible adults in environment**
- **Lack of male role models**
- **Enabling influences in the community – e.g. buying beer for minors**
- **Peer pressures, peer culture, alienation from adults**
- **Enmeshed – everyone knows everyone else's business, not speaking out**



Families

- Love their children, strong protective impulse (overprotective)
- Insularity – disengaged from outside world, fear of outsiders, trust issues
- Parents' experience with system colours relationships with systems (e.g., school, Garda)
- Parenting skills, expectations for behavior and achievement, valuing of education
- Intergenerational issues
- Multiply stressed, lack of family support networks
- Non-traditional family configurations, instability in family constellation
- Lots of hidden needs
- Problems with documentation



Young People Problems

- High-risk behaviors, often at young ages - drugs, alcohol, sexual activity (pregnancy, STDs), aggression
- Mental illness – depression, dual diagnosis
- Developmental disorders – physical and mental disabilities
- Suicidality and self-harm
- Family relationships – conflict, not shielded from adult problems
- Exposure to physical illnesses of all types from early age
- Trauma – bereavement, witness to domestic violence
- Learning problems - school achievement
- Employment prospects
- Highly vulnerable populations
- Travellers as a unique challenge



Young People Perspectives



- Pride of place (identification with Ballymun)
- Resilience in face of adversity
- Self-efficacy & self-esteem
- Concern about Ballymun stigma, over-attribute negative experiences
- Unaware of need for help, what good physical and mental health looks like
- Stigma of mental illness
- Fear of trying new things, openness to experience and learning
- Influence of peer culture
- Can't envision future (lack of positive images, planning)
- Disengaged from outside world

Young People

Possibilities

- Many very capable and high achieving young people, taking advantage of opportunities
- Many supportive families with high aspirations (increasing with foreign nationals, other newcomers)
- Resilient youth
- Success stories

