



WESTERN REGION

Drug & Alcohol Task Force

Meitheal Drugaí an Iarthair

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PARTNER *Ireland*



Evaluation

of the

Planet Youth Project

in Galway, Mayo & Roscommon

2018 - 2022





This Independent Evaluation of
the Planet Youth Project in
Galway, Mayo & Roscommon was
conducted by:



Carroll & Daly Consultants

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The implementation of the 2018-2022 pilot phase of the Planet Youth project in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon was led by the Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF), with the support of partner agencies, and the project has undertaken three cycles of Planet Youth Surveys in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

This independent evaluation of the Planet Youth project was commissioned by the WRDATF in late 2022 and had the following key objectives:

- Examine the project's outputs and identify any notable gaps
- Ascertain how the Planet Youth data is being used by partner agencies in the region
- Examine the effectiveness of the Regional and County Committees as suitable governance and implementation structures for the Planet Youth project
- Make recommendations for future Planet Youth initiatives
- Develop a SWOT analysis of Planet Youth

The evaluation included online feedback surveys with schools, parents and members of County and Regional Committees. One to one interviews were undertaken with Regional and County Committee Chairs, WRDATF staff and project advisors. In addition, results from the Planet Youth Surveys undertaken and resources developed during the life of the project were also examined by the evaluation team.

The introduction section of this evaluation report outlines the background to the Icelandic prevention model. The introduction explains the model's methodology, including the domains of intervention, pillars, and guiding principles.

In Section 2, the report presents a review of the key Planet Youth statistics and outputs available to date, broken down by county and by the year of survey administration. The interventions and actions undertaken by the project are listed and the numbers of participants are provided. The secondary use of the Planet Youth data is also profiled in this section. These typically include their use in support of funding applications, in policy and work plan development and in the development of services and facilities for young people.

In Section 3, the findings from the primary research feedback surveys undertaken for the report are presented. These include the feedback from:

- County Committee Members Survey (24 responses)
- Regional Committee Members Survey (3 responses)
- Schools Survey (22 responses)
- Parents Survey (103 responses)

The feedback from the County Committee members reflects the diversity of organisation types and the geographical spread of organisations involved in the Planet Youth County Committees. The survey asked a range of questions concerning the organisational elements of the project and broadly demonstrated some divergence of opinion around these issues. The feedback indicated a good general understanding of the outputs and aims of the project and of the model itself. A review of the usage of Planet Youth data is also included with the focus on 'Research' and 'Funding Applications'. Respondents also gave a range of qualitative information around the strengths and weaknesses of the process. The 'data' emerged as the main strength while the need for a cultural/institutional change to move towards a preventative model was among a range of issues identified. Participants also indicated that the renewed engagement across schools and young people generally was one of the key achievements, while the need for resources to mainstream the project is a key gap to be addressed.

Among the schools surveyed, there was generally positive feedback in regard to the administration of the surveys, their overall understanding of the project, and the data generated.

Limited feedback from the Regional Committee demonstrated a divergence of opinion around the implementation of the Planet Youth project. There was agreement that the Planet Youth Regional Committee was not adequately resourced but that it did have adequate representation across the sector. Some questions were raised about the overall effectiveness of the committee structures and suggestions were made on how to address these. There was a strong understanding of the Icelandic prevention model and the data generated from the Planet Youth surveys. While some suggestions were made around potential improvements to the project by Regional Committee members, there was a consensus that participation in the project has been a very positive experience.

Among the schools surveyed, there was generally positive feedback in regard to the administration of the surveys, their overall understanding of the project, and the data generated. There was a large amount of variability in the use, distribution and overall response to the data provided. However, schools did utilise the Planet Youth data in a range of ways from general wellbeing measures to specific inclusion in the curriculum. Further, schools made a number of useful recommendations about how the model could be enhanced. In general, the schools were very positive about the experience.

Feedback from parents gave a broad picture of the impact of Planet Youth, with the vast majority hearing of and interacting with the project through their child's school. A significant majority of parents found their experience of Planet Youth very positive and had a good understanding of the data. In terms of issues, the need for action on social media, sleep, self-esteem, mental health and drug and alcohol use were the dominant topics, while communication, restricting mobile/social media access and sleep were identified, among many other, as the main ways parents could support the Planet Youth objectives. Parents were keen to continue communicating and educating themselves on the issues raised by Planet Youth and suggested a wide range of strategies to continue/build this relationship into the future.

In Section 4 of the report, the feedback from the interviews with key project stakeholders is presented. These interviews were semi-structured and posed the following questions:

- Did the Planet Youth project do what it planned to do?
- Was there a timeline and work plan for delivery of Planet Youth?
- Is the project adequately resourced?
- How effective are committee meetings?
- How do the County Committees link with the Regional Committee?
- Have the Planet Youth results been successful in influencing policy and services?
- Is there a need to review membership of the committees?
- What changes, if any, would you make to governance of the committees?
- What are the challenges to encouraging agencies to adopt the preventative approach of Planet Youth?
- If there are challenges, how do we address them?
- Have you any suggestions for improving the process of the Planet Youth project as it is currently?
- What one significant change would you make to the Planet Youth project currently?

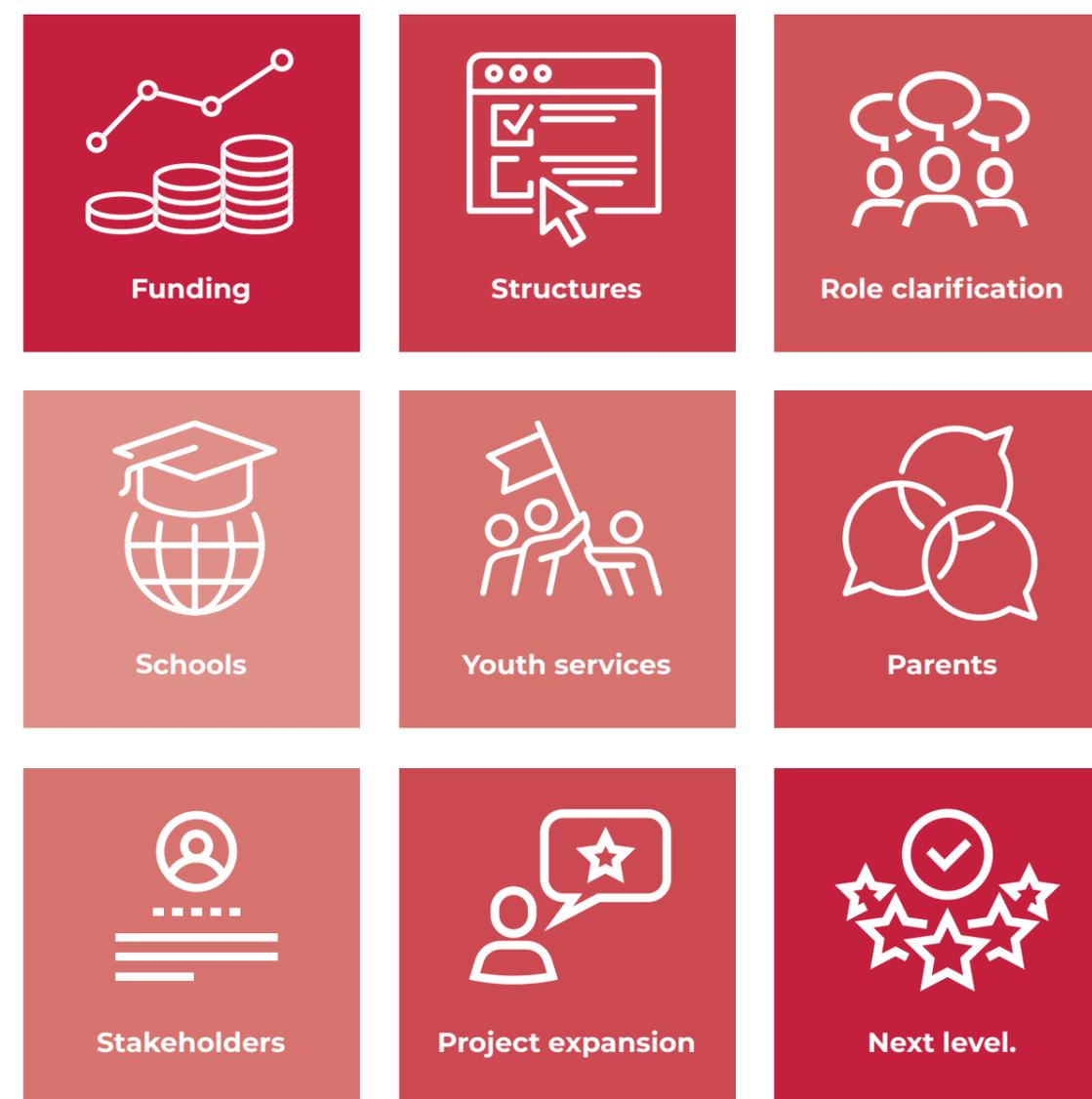
The detailed and insightful feedback provided in response to these questions is presented in this section and will provide invaluable guidance to inform the Planet Youth project approach in future. A summary of the key findings from Sections 3 and 4 are presented in Section 5 of the report. While the key findings from the feedback surveys are outlined above, the key findings from the one-to-one interviews deal with and discuss the following broad topics:

- The adoption of the Icelandic model in an Irish context
- The relationship between and effectiveness of the Regional and County Committees
- The need for a cultural change to implement the primary prevention approach

- The reorganisation of the committee structures around thematic issues
- Organisational culture of targeting high risk groups for intervention

This section of the report also presents the key findings of the research as a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

The final sections of the report provide a conclusion and also make a number of recommendations arising from the evaluation. These sections should inform stakeholders and allow them to build and develop on the Planet Youth project's obvious potential. The evaluation report's recommendations are grouped in Section 6 under the headings below and the report's conclusion is presented in Section 7.



1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 What is Planet Youth?

Planet Youth is the local implementation, in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon of the Icelandic Prevention Model (IPM). The IPM is an evidence-based primary prevention model, developed by researchers, community workers and policy makers in Iceland, to reduce substance use rates amongst young people. The model uses a whole population approach and works by directly targeting the risk and protective factors that determine substance use behaviours and enhancing the social environment that children are growing up in. By reducing the known risk factors and strengthening the known protective factors, the problems associated with adolescent substance use can be reduced or prevented before they arise. Whilst the Icelandic prevention model was developed in order to reduce substance use rates amongst young people, the primary prevention approach offers the opportunity to improve health and life outcomes for young people in many areas.



Within the IPM, the risk and protective factors are defined within four major domains of intervention:

- Parents and family
- Leisure time and local community
- Peer group
- School

These domains are encompassed by the overall social environment and further influenced by regional and national context and policies.

The three pillars of the model are:

1. Evidence-based practice
2. Using a community-based approach
3. Creating and maintaining a dialogue between research, policy and practice

In Iceland, the model produced great results by maintaining a consistent focus on local community work, cross-disciplinary collaboration and investment.

The IPM has 5 guiding principles:

Guiding Principle 1	Apply a primary prevention approach that is designed to enhance the social environment
Guiding Principle 2	Emphasise community action and embrace public schools as the natural hub of neighbourhood and area efforts to support child and adolescent health, learning, and life success
Guiding Principle 3	Engage and empower community members to make practical decisions using local, high quality, accessible data and diagnostics
Guiding Principle 4	Integrate researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and community members into a unified team dedicated to solving complex, real-world problems
Guiding Principle 5	Match the scope of the solution to the scope of the problem, including emphasising long-term intervention and efforts to marshal adequate community resources

In early 2018, the Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF) established the Planet Youth project in the Western Region (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon). Using a collaborative approach with statutory agency partners, the WRDATF entered into a 5-year pilot Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA) to process the data from three biennial Planet Youth Surveys and provide the Planet Youth Guidance Programme. At the same time, an organisational structure was put in place to drive and oversee the process; a County Committee in each county and an overarching Regional Committee.

Planet Youth has completed three cycles of surveys in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, in 2018, 2020 and again in 2022. The 2022 survey has just been completed at the time of writing this evaluation. A strategy and implementation framework document¹ was developed in consultation with the members of the Planet Youth County and Regional Steering Committees and was launched in February 2020. This document sets out the vision, mission, objectives, and policy context that Planet Youth can operate within to establish primary prevention as a method of working in the region.

1.2 Background to the evaluation

As the pilot phase of Planet Youth is coming to a conclusion at the end of 2022, it is timely to review the initial five-year project. As part of the review process, a stakeholder workshop was held, in May 2022, to examine the next steps for the Planet Youth project. The workshop was entitled 2023 Onwards: The Future of Planet Youth², and was independently facilitated.

The workshop highlighted the main challenges that stakeholders perceive with the implementation of the Planet Youth project, namely:

- Lack of sustainable funding for Planet Youth operation
- Ensuring buy-in from influential decision makers in local services
- Ensuring buy-in at national level politically
- Committee structures not working optimally
- Better sharing of good practice is required

¹ Planet Youth Strategy and Implementation Framework

² 2023 Onwards: The Future of Planet Youth -Stakeholder Workshop Report 06.05.22

- Introducing primary prevention activities into busy pre-existing work plans and strategies
- Lack of dedicated funding for Planet Youth primary prevention activities
- Difficult to demonstrate project achievements as outcomes are long term

The stakeholders did agree that they are benefitting from Planet Youth as it provides access to local, timely data regarding young people's lives and delivers important local data not available elsewhere. This makes it a good investment and value for money for funding organisations. The workshop identified the need for a process evaluation of the Planet Youth project to date and identified the topics for inclusion in the evaluation process.

1.3 Objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to look at the process of the implementation, development, delivery, and outputs of the Planet Youth project. Its objectives are to:

- Ascertain how the Planet Youth data is being utilised by partner agencies in the region
- Examine the effectiveness of the Regional and County Committees as suitable governance and implementation structures for the Planet Youth project
- Examine the project's outputs and identify any notable gaps
- Develop a SWOT analysis of Planet Youth
- Make recommendations for future Planet Youth initiatives

1.4 Methodology

The aim of this evaluation is to examine the operation of the Planet Youth pilot project and its outputs. It is not an outcomes evaluation, as this will need to happen at a later date when impacts of Planet Youth actions can be better measured.

The evaluation process incorporated the following:

- Online survey for Planet Youth County and Regional Committees
- Online survey of parents
- Online survey of schools
- One to one interviews with County Committee Chairs
- One to one interviews with WRDATF staff
- One to one interviews with project advisors
- Examination of statistics from the Planet Youth Surveys
- Examination of resources developed by Planet Youth in response to survey findings

2 DATA COLLECTIONS & OUTPUTS

This section provides a summary of the data collections undertaken and key outputs since the Planet Youth project's inception in 2018.

2.1 The Planet Youth surveys

All of the 91 post-primary schools and Youthreach centres in the region were involved in the project. The county breakdown of these is as follows:



2018	
Survey	Core Planet Youth questionnaire
Total numbers	4,848 students are in the full dataset 4,480 students at 15-16 years old (82% of students at 15-16 years old completed the survey)
Galway report	2,613 participants
Mayo report	1,379 participants
Roscommon report	488 participants
School reports	Distributed to all schools with more than 23 participants Schools with <23 participants received a combined school report

2020	
Survey	Modified Planet Youth questionnaire encompassing wider health behaviours and wellbeing indicators. Survey administered by in-school coordinators. This survey and dataset is particularly notable as it was conducted during the period of COVID19 restrictions.
Total numbers	5,004 students are in the full dataset 4,478 students at 15-16 years old (79.9% of students at 15-16 years old completed the survey – absenteeism was high due to COVID19)
Galway report	2,540 participants
Mayo report	1,352 participants
Roscommon report	586 participants
School reports	Distributed to all schools with more than 20 participants Combined school reports for those with <20 participants 87 different school reports produced (24 pages)

2022	
Survey	The survey was conducted in November and December 2022. The questionnaire further modified and adapted for use locally and also used online for the first time. In school coordinators trained on new methodology.
Total numbers	5,275 students are in the full dataset 4,615 students at 15-16 years old
Galway report	2,623 participants and published in March 2023
Mayo report	1,405 participants and published in March 2023
Roscommon report	587 participants and published in March 2023
School reports	Will be published in March 2023 and distributed to all schools with more than 20 participants

2.2 Prevention interventions developed using the Planet Youth data

A wide variety of intervention initiatives have been developed by WRDATF staff in conjunction with partner agencies. These are outlined below:

The Planet Youth website:

This was launched in May 2019 and is the main portal for all Planet Youth activity. It hosts the county reports and infographics, parent resources, videos, news items and contact information for the project. The website has had 29,248 unique users since it was launched.

Planet Youth 2018 County Reports:

The first Planet Youth County Reports were published in April 2019 and were based on the information provided by ICSRA (Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis). The data reporting was focussed particularly on substance use rates and the associated risk and protective factors in each domain of intervention.

Planet Youth - Guidelines for Parents booklet:

This booklet was developed during the summer of 2019 and has been distributed, along with the accompanying Bedtimes Fridge Magnet, to incoming first-year parents in the region since September 2019. These are distributed to parents through their schools and supported by Planet Youth information sessions at first-year parent induction evenings in schools.

6,000 booklets and bedtime fridge magnets were distributed in September and October 2019, and 3,300 during the COVID19 restrictions in September and October 2020. The Guidelines for Parents booklet was redesigned and reprinted in 2021 to reflect the data from the 2020 survey. 6,665 of the new booklets, together with the fridge magnets, were distributed in September and October 2021 and a further 5,162 in September and October 2022, together with Planet Youth information sessions at first-year parent induction evenings in schools.

Over 8,000 parents have been addressed directly at their school's first-year induction evenings since 2019. A further 15,000 Planet Youth Guidelines for Parents booklets will be reprinted in 2023. These will be redesigned and updated to reflect the 2022 survey data, and distributed to the incoming first-year parents in 2023 and 2024.

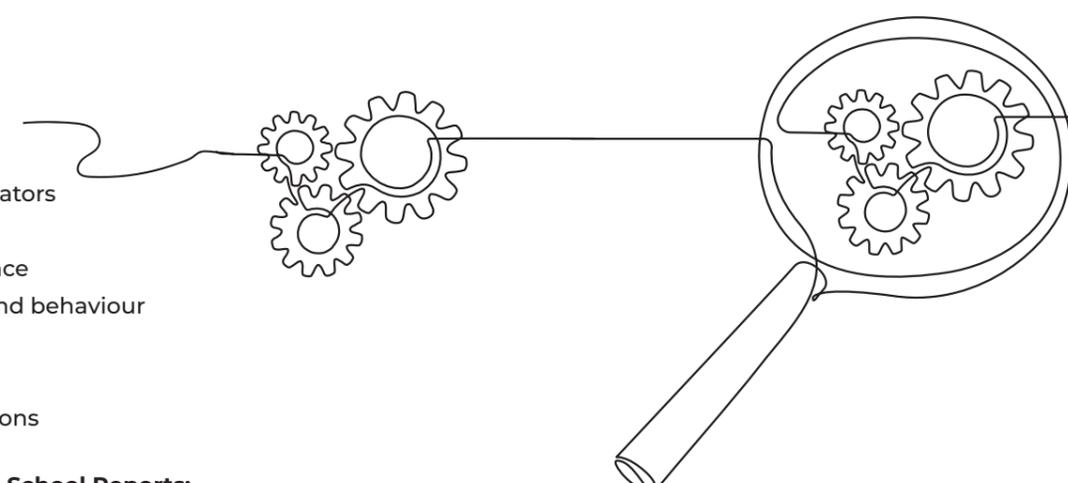
The StepUp website:

This was developed at the start of COVID19 and launched in May 2020. It is a school transition website designed to assist parents and students with the move from national school to secondary school. The website had 21,126 users during the summer of 2020, 9,453 in 2021 and 10,895 users in 2022.

Planet Youth 2020 County Reports:

The 2020 Planet Youth County Reports were locally developed, in collaboration with the County Committees, and an advancement on the 2018 data reporting supplied by ICSRA. These 52-page documents provided information in the following categories:

- Trends
- Substance use
- Family time
- Screen time
- Wellbeing indicators
- Leisure time
- School experience
- Sexual health and behaviour
- Conclusions
- Key messages
- Recommendations



Planet Youth 2020 School Reports:

The 2020 Planet Youth School Reports were also locally developed. The 2020 School Reports were 24-page documents and provided schools detailed information for self-evaluation and reporting purposes, and for planning their wellbeing programmes. They contained information in the following categories:

- School
- Substance use
- Wellbeing indicators
- Sexual health

- Peer group behaviour
- Leisure time
- Online behaviour
- Conclusions
- Gender differences
- Cross tabulations
- Recommendations

The Facts SPHE website:

This was developed in 2021 and launched to coincide with the delivery of the 2020 Planet Youth School Reports in May 2021. It has had 3,000 users since its launch. It is utilised by schools in the region and supports delivery of the Junior Cycle wellbeing programme. Data from each survey is returned for use in the classroom.

Planet Youth – Parent Power booklet:

The Parent Power booklet for national school parents was developed with support from Tusla’s Parent Support Champions project and launched in December 2021. 6,000 Parent Power calendars and 19,260 Parent Power booklets and Fridge Stickers were distributed in late 2021 and early 2022 through 440 national schools in the region. These were sufficient for all of the junior infant, senior infant and first class parents in these schools.

An additional 7,800 Parent Power Booklets and Fridge Stickers were distributed to the new incoming junior infant parents during Autumn 2022. The Parent Power project is the start of efforts to improve formal parental networking and collaboration. An additional 15,000 Planet Youth Parent Power booklets will be reprinted in early 2023, redesigned and updated to reflect the 2022 survey data, and distributed to the incoming junior infant parents in 2023 and 2024.

Parent Power website:

This was developed in December 2021 and launched to coincide with the distribution of the first Parents Power booklets. It contains the booklet in eight language versions and also the parental agreement templates and resources. The website has had 1,048 unique users since it was launched.

Parent workshops:

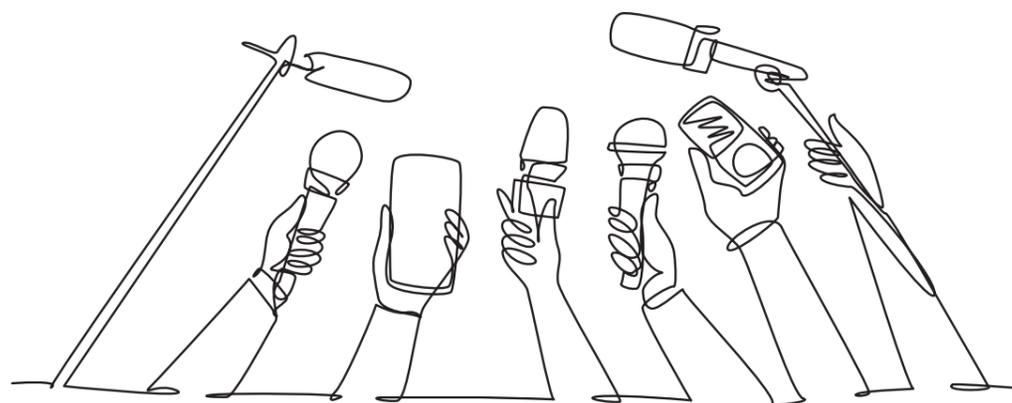
920 parents attended facilitated online Planet Youth parent workshops during the COVID19 restrictions. These were delivered with the support of partner agencies and focussed on the challenges of supporting children and teenagers during COVID19.

Parent webinars:

Planet Youth webinars on leisure time, school transition and sleep have been attended live by 4,300 parents and a further 5,500 have watched webinar recordings.

Social Media:

Planet Youth has active Facebook (2,386 followers) and Twitter (560 followers) accounts and has run organic and paid social media post and video campaigns highlighting key messages from the 2018 and 2020 surveys. Video campaigns have been developed for alcohol use, sleep, physical activity, screen use and parenting. These campaigns have been targeted at parents in the region and have had 71,400 video plays on Facebook and 62,500 on Twitter.





2.3 Secondary use of Planet Youth datasets

The stakeholder workshop held in Tuam in May 2022 highlighted the use of Planet Youth data by organisations and agencies. This usage is summarised under the following categories:

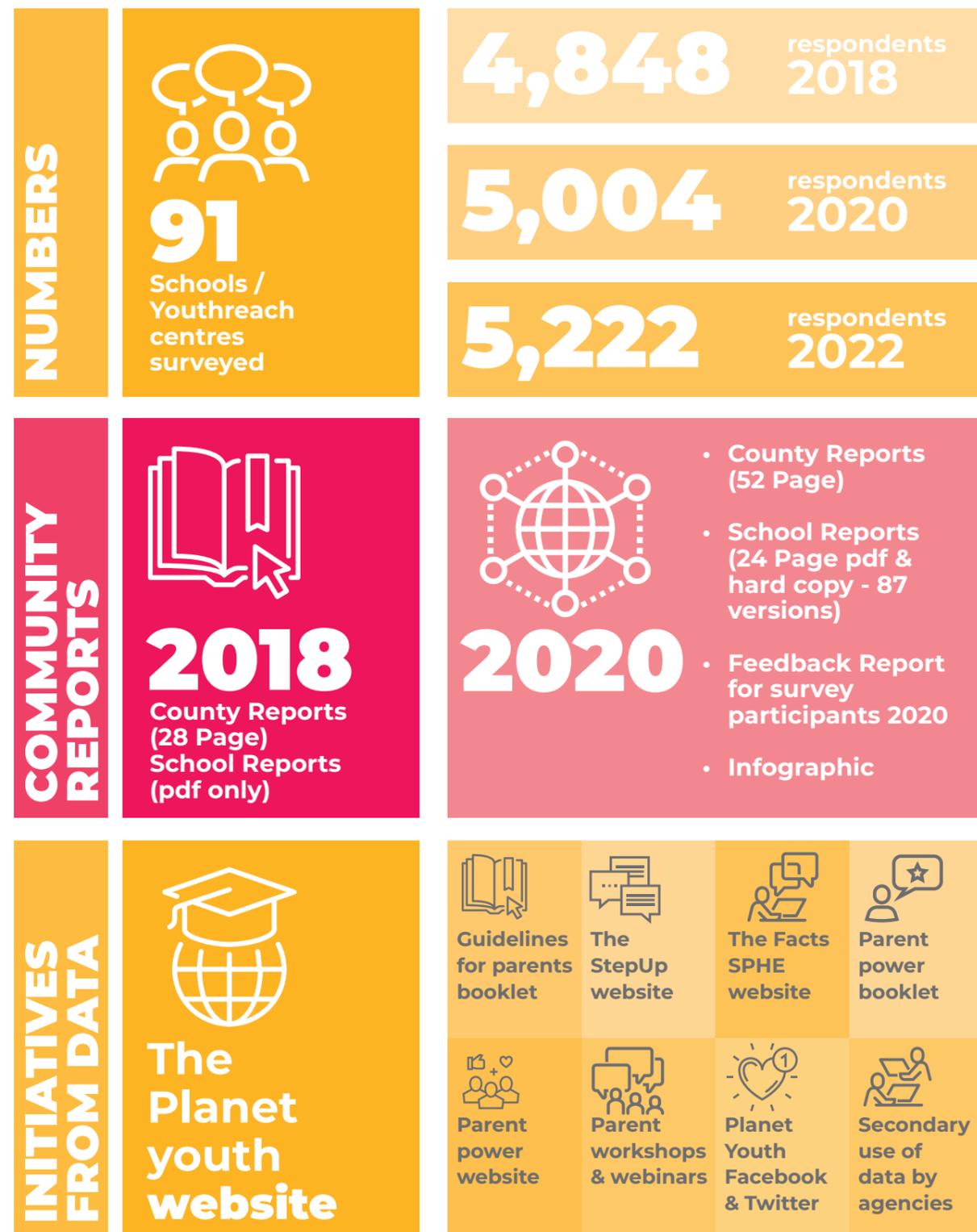
- In the development of funding applications. Planet Youth is being used to provide an evidence-base for the needs of young people in specific geographic areas. The data can be supplied to agencies at town, municipal district and county level.
- As a mechanism for hearing the voice of young people in youth participation processes. It is used by organisations as a source of primary research with young people to inform the development of services.
- Teaching and academic research at local third level institutions

The Planet Youth Coordinator compiled a list of current or planned use of Planet Youth data in April 2022³. The usage aligns with that identified in the Tuam workshop, namely:

- Supporting grant applications
- Helping services to design activities and priorities
- Area based needs analysis and community planning
- Health promotion
- Informing students on third level courses
- Utilised in local Children and Young Peoples Services Committees (CYPSC) plans
- Providing a business case for more services and facilities for young people, especially when accessing funding for positive mental health
- Scope to be utilised to modify existing training programmes such as Understanding Self-Harm
- Advancement of research programmes, such as the Inform - YSP project at the University of Galway. Inform - YSP is using the Planet Youth datasets to examine the relationship between risk and protective factors and suicidal ideation and behaviour.

³ Planet Youth document to record current or planned use of Planet Youth data by stakeholders (April 2022)

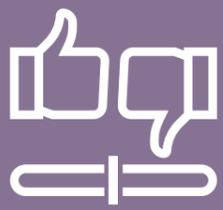
Planet Youth Outputs



3 FEEDBACK SURVEY RESPONSES

Four online feedback surveys were administered as part of the evaluation of Planet Youth. One was sent to parents who had interacted with Planet Youth. Another was sent to all participating schools in Galway, Roscommon and Mayo. Additionally, each member of the Planet Youth County and Regional Committees was invited to fill in a survey online. The surveys were designed to gather feedback and opinions on Planet Youth as well as suggestions for any changes or improvements.





The surveys were designed to gather feedback and opinions on Planet Youth as well as suggestions for any changes or improvements.

3.1 County Committees Feedback Survey Results

The Galway County Committee has 20 members; Mayo has 11 members and Roscommon has 14. The committee members represent a wide range of agencies and organisations. They were asked a series of questions around the effectiveness of the committees, the strengths and achievements of Planet Youth, and how to enhance and develop the process.

In total, 24 organisations replied to the County Committees Survey with 50% (12) coming from the Galway Steering Committee and seven and five coming from the Mayo and Roscommon Committees respectively.

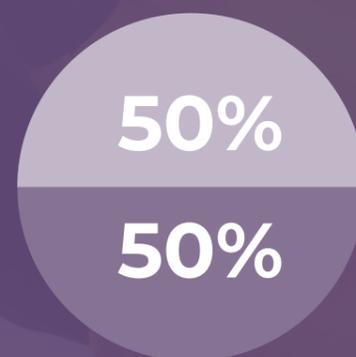
The following organisations replied to the survey:

- ARD Family Resource Centre
- Atlantic Technological University
- Colaiste Muire Máthair Galway
- COPE Galway
- Galway City Partnership
- Galway County Council
- Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee CYPSC
- Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) 2 responses
- Galway Rural Development
- Health Service Executive (HSE) 4 responses
- Mayo CYPSC
- Mayo Sports Partnership
- Mindspace Mayo
- Post-primary school (unnamed)
- Roscommon County Council
- Roscommon CYPSC
- St. Colman's College Claremorris
- Tusla
- University of Galway
- Vita House/ South Roscommon Family Resource Centre
- Youth Work Ireland Galway

Operational Question

Do you believe your County Committee is adequately resourced and prepared to carry out its intended function?

24 responses



- Yes
- No

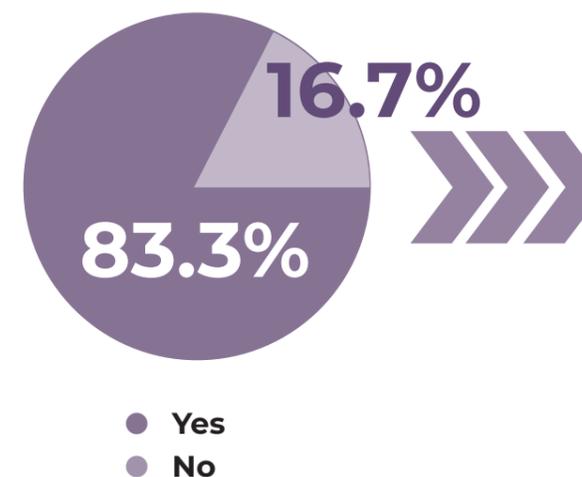
Organisations on the County Committees were evenly split on the question of adequate resources, with a large number (6) of responses, pointing to the lack of a dedicated budget for the Committee. Other issues highlighted were:

- The challenge of matching Planet Youth with individual organisations
- Partnership approach
- Coordinator for each County Committee
- WRDATF vacancy
- More buy-in from delivery organisations

Operational Question

Does the County Committee include the relevant stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of the Planet Youth programme?

24 responses



- Yes
- No

A relatively small percentage (16.7%) of members felt that their County Committee did not include all of the relevant stakeholders, specifically mentioning the following:

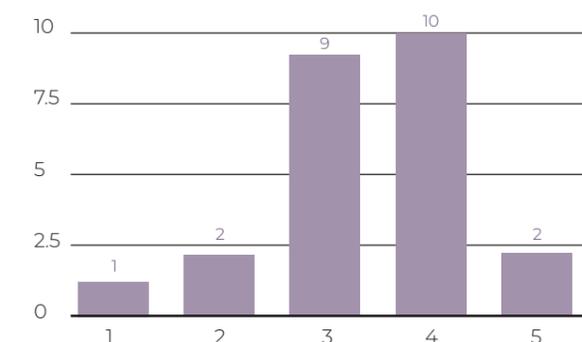
- More senior HSE representation in Mayo
- Enhanced relationships with Tusla and County Council
- Members in the education sector
- Healthy Ireland coordinators
- Gardaí
- Youthreach or other youth organisations

Operational Question

How is the relationship between the regional and county committee?

24 responses

On balance, the relationship between the Regional and County Committee is largely, but not universally, seen as positive. Several respondents mentioned the need for clearer demarcation of roles of the two committees. The strong facilitation role played by the coordinator as well as a degree of membership overlap are seen as key factors in developing a broadly united approach between the two committees.



1 = Very weak 5 = Very Strong

When asked how the coordination and communication between the Regional and County Committees could be improved, members made the following suggestions:

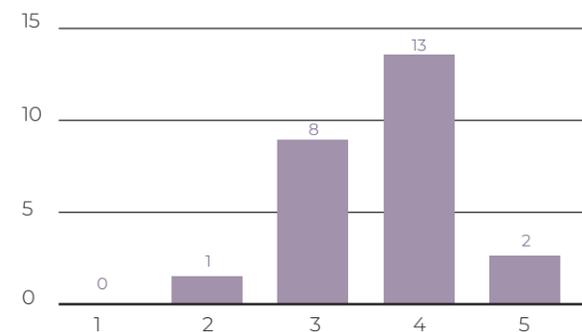
- Improved feedback and communication (8)
- Meeting all stakeholders in person (2)
- Clear guidelines
- More regular meetings to include the coordinator
- Clear identification of goals and working towards them
- Stakeholder feedback event to be replicated



Operational Question

Overall, in your view, how effective is the Planet Youth County Committee?

24 responses



**1 = Not at all effective,
5 = Very effective**

Once again, feedback was broadly positive about the effectiveness of the County Committees.

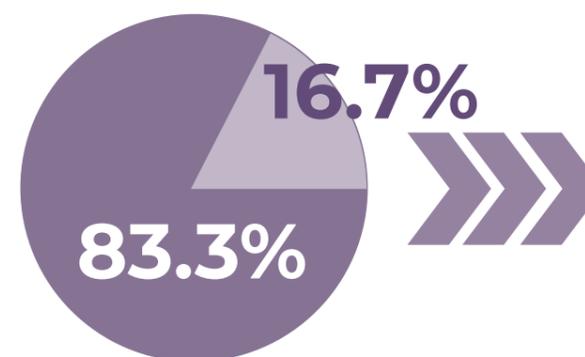
However, many of the members acknowledged the structural challenges faced by the committees (6), while several also indicated regular emails and strong leadership as key factors in the group's successes (5).

The need for greater input from members, wider dissemination of data and the need for a dedicated coordinator (for each County Committee) were also mentioned.

Operational Question

Are the frequency and duration of the County Committee meetings sufficient?

24 responses



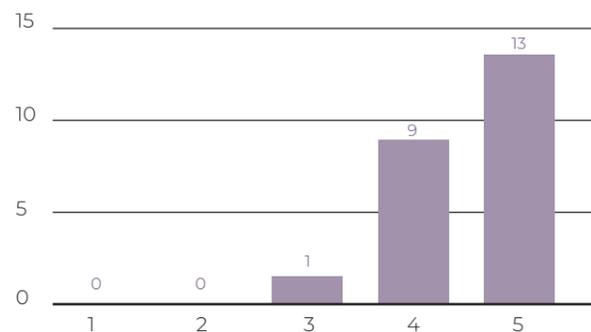
- Yes
- No

While the majority agreed that the frequency of County Committee meetings was adequate, a small number (3) indicated a willingness to attend more frequent meetings.

Understanding Question

How well do you understand the Planet Youth results disseminated to you to date?

23 responses



County Committee members indicated a good understanding of the Planet Youth results as disseminated to date.

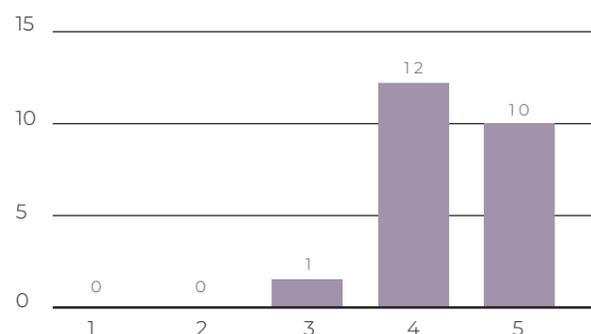
1 = Not at all
5 = Very well



Understanding Question

How well do you understand the Planet Youth model?

23 responses



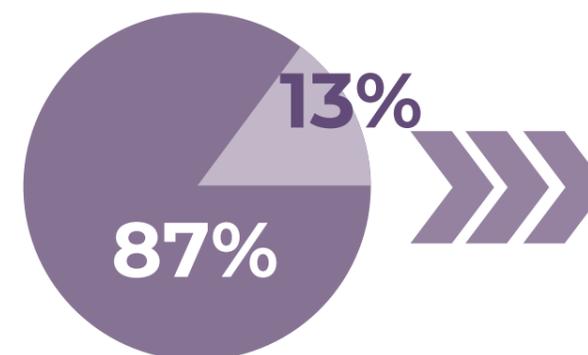
While not quite as equivocal as the previous question, members indicated a good understanding of the prevention model overall.

1 = Not at all
5 = Fully Understood

Understanding Question

Is the focus of your County Committee aligned with the Planet Youth objectives?

23 responses



- Yes
- No

87% of County Committee members indicated strong alignment with the Planet Youth objectives. Of those less convinced, they indicated that the full implementation of the 'Icelandic Model' may not be possible in a 'West of Ireland' context. Therefore, 'full alignment' may not be possible. However, one response pointed to the research finding relationships and correlations that were not previously known and therefore valuable.

Data Question

How do you use Planet Youth data in your organisation?

24 responses



The largest number of organisations utilised the Planet Youth Data to support funding applications (15) and research (14). The data was also used widely for the development of workplans (10); lobbying and advocacy (9) and in developing policies (8). Three organisations also use the data in teaching and training programmes, while three organisations have not yet used the data, but do intend to.

When asked what the key strengths of the Planet Youth project are, respondents identified the data as the main strength (8). The educational element for parents was mentioned (3) along with the insight it provided into young people's lives (2). The hard work of the coordinator and chairperson (2) and the collaborative approach was indicated by (2) others. The alignment with the proven Icelandic model along with the slightly contradictory 'flexibility and diversity' in approach were also mentioned (1 each).

When asked about 'weaknesses' the responses were varied, with no more than one person indicating the following:

- Cultural change
- Too many projects
- A lot of grey areas that are difficult to cover
- The challenge of using the data
- Need to make the case for Service Level Agreement (SLA) funding
- Difficult to translate into multi-agency actions
- Need to make difference more explicit
- Mismatch of goals at government level
- Maintaining momentum
- Those who need it most show the least interest
- Cost of implementation
- Lack of supporting infrastructure
- Lack of base data regarding current activities
- Keeping Planet Youth on the agenda
- Evolve with results
- Practical application

County Committee members were asked to outline the key achievements and successes of the project. The following responses were given:



Key Achievements & Success

- Engagement with parents (8)
- Data (6)
- Engaging stakeholders and bring them together (5)
- Engaging young people (5)
- Engagement with schools (3)
- Understanding trends/issues (2)
- Municipal District reports
- Parenting booklets
- Dissemination of information
- Research opportunity
- Learning from Iceland
- Establishing the model

When asked to identify areas of missed opportunity for the Planet Youth project, the following observations were made by County Committee members:



Identify Missed Opportunity

- Funding for mainstreaming/expanding of the Planet Youth project (5).
- Need for greater brand recognition and a general paradigm shift towards preventative actions
- Interaction with Youth Services and the informal Education Sector
- Inclusion of questions on the impact of COVID19 in the wider survey
- Clearer communication of project goals to stakeholders
- More engagement with sports and leisure groups
- Tools to map existing services and plan for how to interact with them

Members were further asked to suggest how to improve Planet Youth in the region. The following suggestions were made:



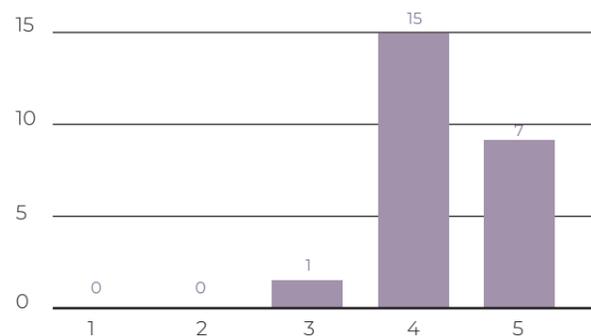
Suggest Improvements

- Commitment from agencies (HSE, Tusla, Local Authorities) to include early intervention, evidence based practice in their programmes
- Clarify what success in 2024/5 would look like and stick to that
- Additional resources to allow lobbying and engagement with national policy
- A coordinator/administrator in each county
- Input from An Garda Síochána on drug use and/or youth safety approaches

Question

Please rate your overall experience of the Planet Youth project?

23 responses



County Committee members' overall experience of Planet Youth has been positive, with some room for improvement cited among 30% of the respondents to the survey.

**1 = Very negative
5 = Very positive**

3.2 Regional Committee Feedback Survey Results

There are 10 members on the Regional Committee (including the coordinator). The Regional Committee is comprised of the independent chairpersons from each of the County Committees, some are members of County Committees that are representing their agencies on a regional basis and some are senior representatives from funding partner agencies. Three members of the Regional Planet Youth Committee responded to this version of the feedback survey, the other members provided their perspective on the Planet Youth Project when responding to the County Committees Feedback Survey.

All of the respondents agreed that the Regional Committee is not adequately resourced to carry out its function. Respondents indicated that the Regional Committees remit includes an overview of actions that it does not have the resources to manage effectively. It was also indicated that the group is reliant on partner agencies to deliver on the committee's behalf. It was suggested that the purpose/function of the Regional Committee should be revised to reflect these limitations. Poor attendance at committee meetings was also pointed to as an issue. However, all respondents agreed that the committee does include all of the relevant stakeholders to ensure effective delivery of the Planet Youth project.

There was some divergence of opinion on the relationship between the Regional and County Committees, with one indicating that they perceive a poor understanding of the Regional Committee function among County Committee members (who were not on both). Another was unclear on how the relationship worked while the third responded that they believe there is good feedback from the Regional Committee at County Committee meetings.

Regional Committee members made the following suggestions to improve links between the Regional and County Committees:

- Reconfigure the County Committees into thematic committees, which differentiate their function and allow the Regional Committee to focus on oversight, to promote the data gathering function as well as the use of the data to affect change and focus resources.
- Regular Regional Committee meetings with reports from the chair or coordinator to the County Committees
- Increased attendance by Regional Committee members at the meetings

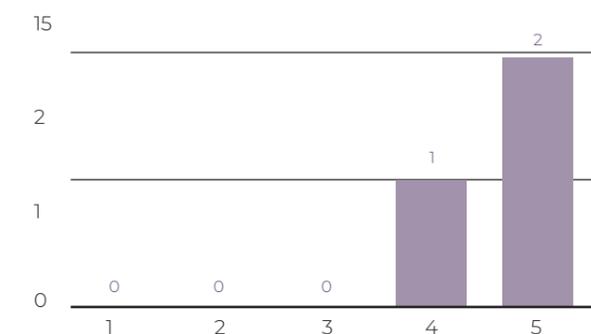
All responses to this question were highly qualified. There was acknowledgement that COVID-19 hampered the operation of the committee in terms of scheduling and attendance, but that recent meetings had been more effective and offer a good foundation for future development. Respondents agreed that frequency and duration of meetings were sufficient.



Understanding Question

How well do you understand the Planet Youth model?

3 responses



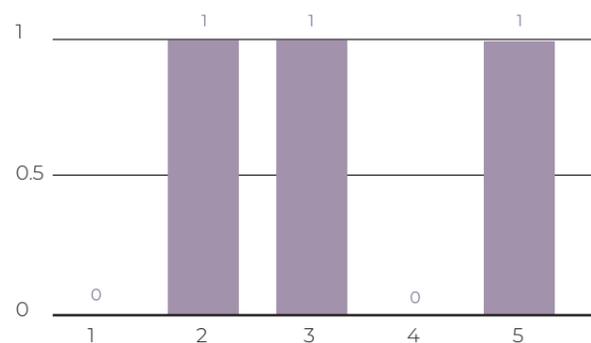
As one might expect, there was good overall understanding of the prevention model among Regional Committee members.

**1 = Not at all
5 = Fully understood**

Understanding Question

Is the focus of the Regional Committee aligned with the Planet Youth objectives?

3 responses



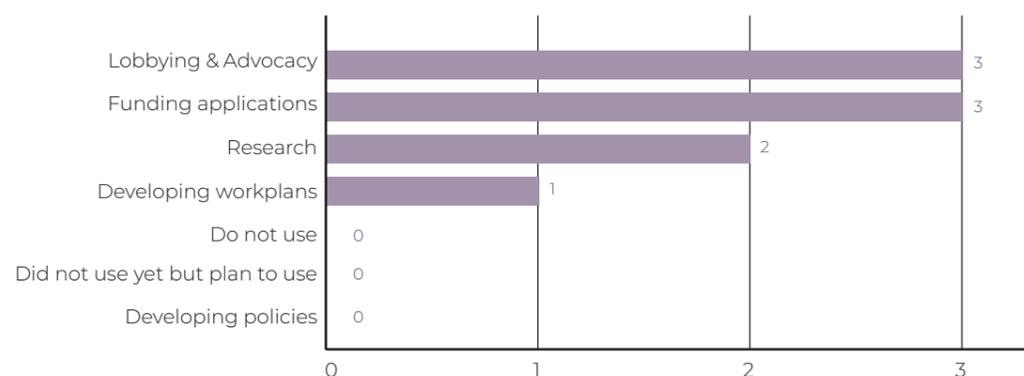
There was, however, some ambiguity around the alignment of the Regional and County Committees' objectives with respondents indicating that they are 'torn' between rolling out preventative initiatives themselves and disseminating information and supporting schools, parents and agencies to inform actions.

1 = Not at all 5 = Fully aligned

Data Question

How do you use Planet Youth data in your organisation?

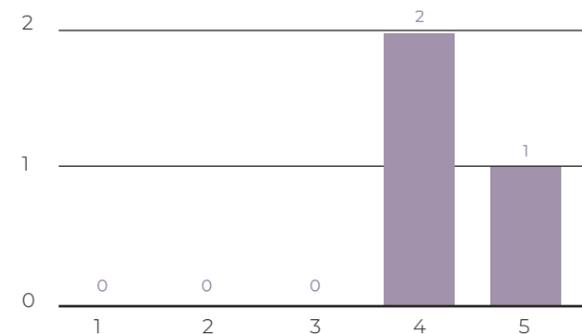
3 responses



Data Question

How well do you understand the Planet Youth results disseminated to you to date?

3 responses



There was a reasonably strong understanding of the Planet Youth data disseminated to date. All of the respondents indicated that they utilised the data for lobbying and advocacy and to support funding applications with two utilising the data for research and one using the data for the development of workplans.

1 = Not at all 5 = Very well

Interestingly, none of the three indicated that the Planet Youth information was utilised in policy development. Although this may be more a matter of timing of organisations' policy review/development rather than any issue with the Planet Youth data as such.

When asked what the project's 'strengths and weaknesses' were, the following were mentioned:

Strengths:

The breadth and scope of the data collected and the promptness of the response as well as the way the data is presented. The fact that the data is 'from here' gives a strong basis for funding applications etc.

Weaknesses:

Attempting to copy the 'Icelandic model' too closely has led to some frustration as the method and approaches are not always adaptable to a 'West of Ireland' setting. Also, there are a number of stakeholders 'not on board' with Planet Youth yet and many are unable to incorporate the data into their working models. There is also a large amount of data collected that is not used or analysed.

Respondents were further asked what they felt were the 'achievements and successes' of Planet Youth. The following points were made:

- Data
- Opportunity to work with and develop links with primary and secondary schools, which did not exist prior to this project
- Links with parents, particularly during the pandemic
- Number of parents signing up for online information sessions
- The delivery of early intervention and prevention messages to primary schools
- The Planet Youth coordinator

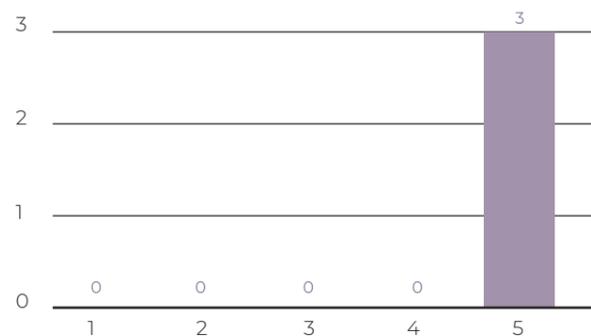
The following gaps were identified:

- Consider messaging parents through existing structures
- Project design was based on the assumption that different issues would arise in different counties. However, the experience has shown them to be more similar than not. The project structures should be revised to reflect this. County Committees should be changed to thematic committees, based on target group based responses (e.g. parents, peers, schools etc.)
- There is a mismatch between the roles of the Regional and County Committees, with the Regional Committee being more action and delivery orientated, while the County Committees are more information orientated.

Question

Please rate your overall experience of the Planet Youth project?

3 responses



While the Regional Committee members did make a number of practical suggestions around project function and design, they all agreed that, overall, the project has had a positive impact.

**1 = Very negative
5 = Very positive**



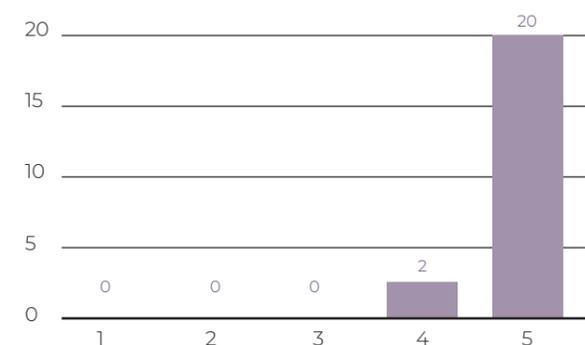
3.3 Schools Feedback Survey Results

All schools and Youthreach centres were sent an online survey. 22 schools from the region completed the schools survey, with representation across all three counties. The majority of respondents (14) were school principals. Other respondents were: Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Programme Coordinator, SPHE Coordinator, School Chaplain, TY Coordinator, Year Head and Youthreach Coordinator.

Administration Question

Do you think you were given adequate information on Planet Youth?

22 responses

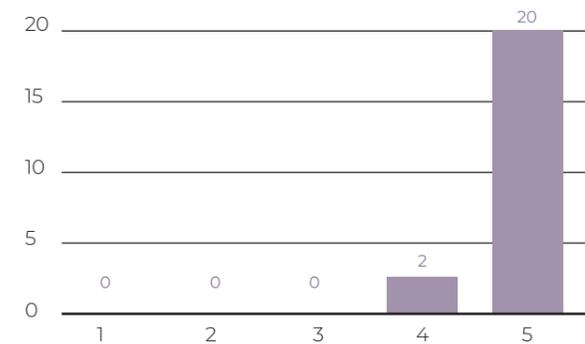


All of the schools felt that they were given adequate information on Planet Youth. An identical number of schools agreed that it was easy to organise and administer the survey.

1 = No not at all 5 = Yes very much so

Was it easy to organise and administer the Planet Youth survey?

22 responses



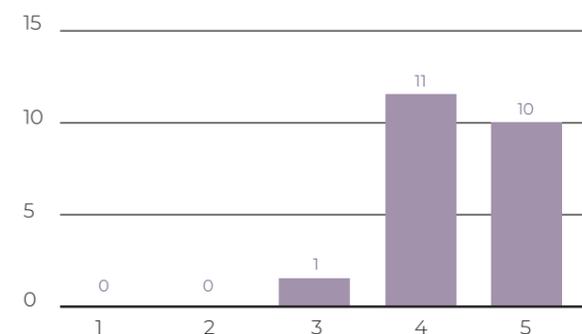
1 = No very difficult 5 = Yes very easy



Administration Question

In general how did students react to being surveyed by Planet Youth?

22 responses



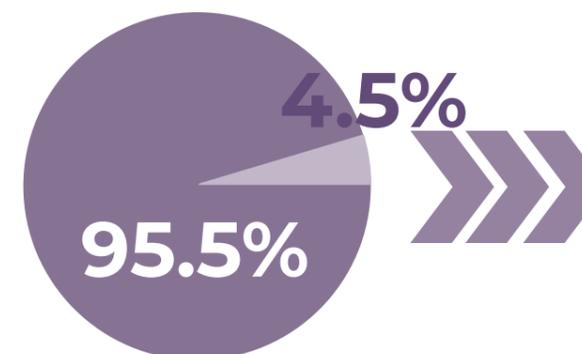
The schools, when asked about the students' reaction to being surveyed for Planet Youth, indicated that they reacted either positively (50%) or very positively (45%). While not quite as convincing as the previous results, there is no indication of resistance or negativity evidenced in their responses.

1 = Very negatively
5 = Very positively

Results Question

Did you receive an individual school report?

22 responses

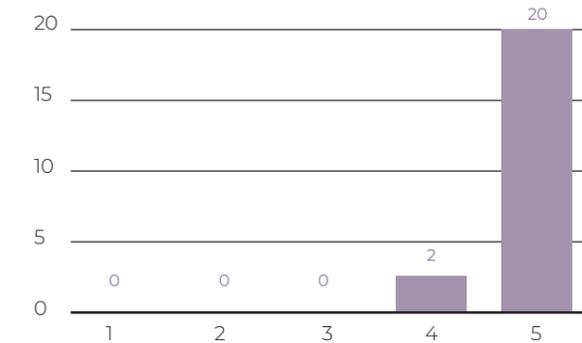


All but one school indicated that they received their individual school report and all of the schools indicated that they understood the results as presented.

● Yes
● No

Did you understand the results as they were presented?

22 responses



1 = No, not at all
5 = Yes, fully

Results Question

Does your school need support in interpreting the survey results?

22 responses

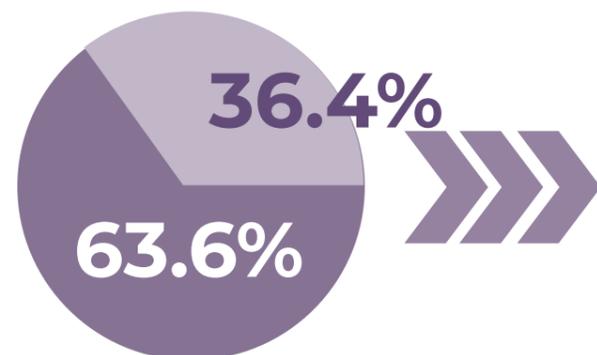


Only one school indicated that they needed support in interpreting the results of the surveys. However, 63% of the schools said that they did follow up with Planet Youth after receiving the survey results.

- Yes
- No

Did you follow up with Planet Youth after receiving the survey results?

22 responses

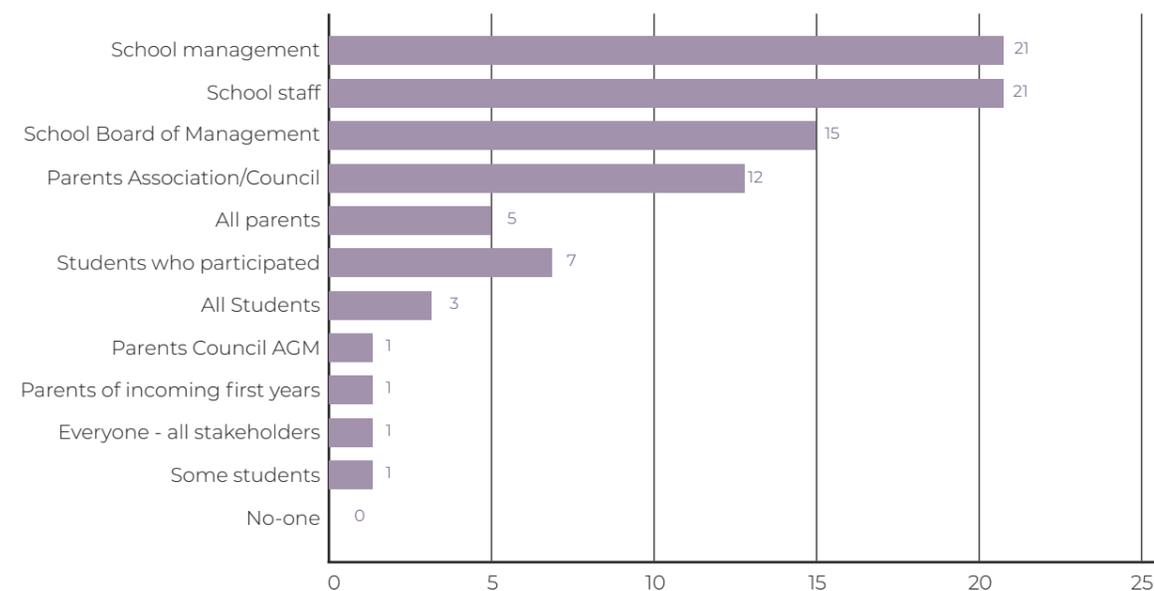


- Yes
- No

When asked about with whom they shared the school results, almost all (21) of the schools shared the results with school management and staff. 15 of the schools shared the results with their Boards of Management, while just over half of the schools shared their results their Parents Association/Council. Interestingly, less than a third (7) of schools chose to share the results with the students who were the subject of the survey and five schools shared the results with 'All parents'. 3 schools shared the results with 'All students' while one school shared the results with their 'Parents Council AGM', 'Parents of incoming first years' and 'Some students'. One school indicated that they shared the Planet Youth results for their school with 'Everyone – all stakeholders'.

Who did you share the Planet Youth results with?

22 responses



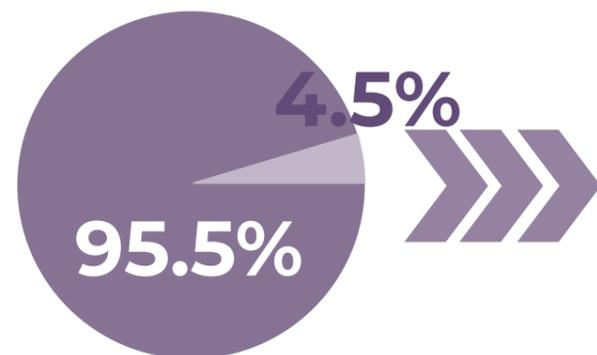
Just over 40% of schools organised a meeting of stakeholders to plan how to respond to the results, which may indicate a need for a more inclusive/strategic approach to be taken when discussing and sharing the information in the reports.



Follow Up Questions

Did the Planet Youth survey results identify issues that could be addressed by your school / project?

22 responses



All but one of the participating schools felt that the Planet Youth results identified issues that they could address, indicating that many schools followed up in a constructive way on the information they were given.

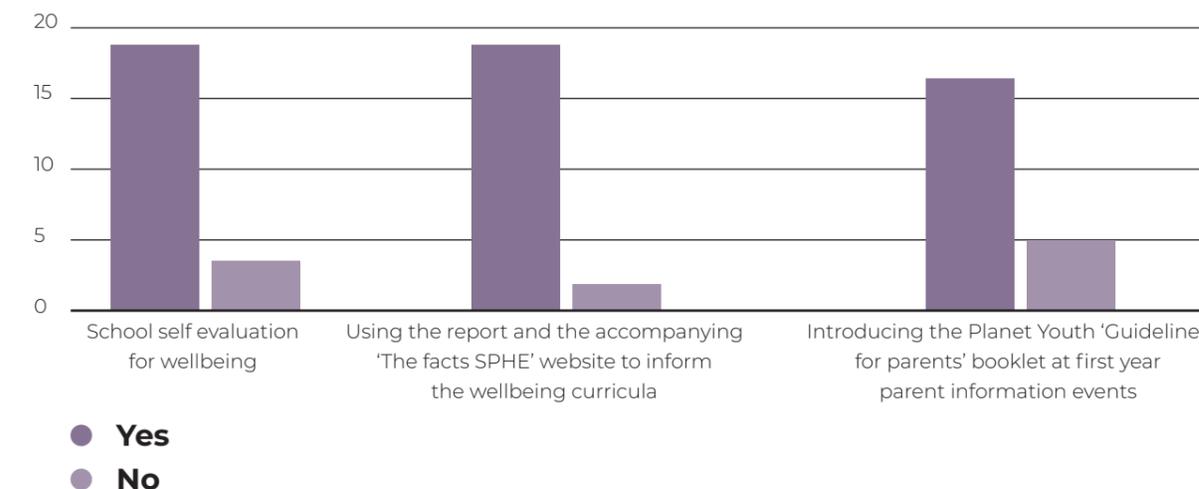
- Yes
- No

When asked, schools offered the following explanations:

- Work with new school wellbeing coordinator/introduced wellbeing programme (5)
- Gave us a focus/identified gaps (3)
- Highlighted results with parents (3)
- Introduced guest speakers on topics (2)
- Focus on sleep (2)
- Address via principal
- Discussed survey with year heads
- Spoke about issues in assembly
- CPD workshop
- Student workshops
- SPHE workshops
- More support for students
- Revised anti-bullying policy
- Time factor
- Formed part of SSE (School Self Evaluation)

19 of the schools implemented the recommendations listed in the school report under the headings of 'School self evaluation for wellbeing' and 'Using the report and the accompanying 'The Facts SPHE' website to inform the wellbeing curricula', while a slightly smaller number (17) introduced the 'Planet Youth 'Guidelines for Parents' booklet at first year parent information events.

Did your school implement the three recommendations as listed in the school report?



When asked 'What programmes, policies or actions did you implement in response to the results of the Planet Youth survey?', schools gave the following answers:

- Wellbeing (6)
- Mental health (3)
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (3)
- Include in first year parent information evenings (3)
- Anti-bullying (2)
- Student participation
- One Good School
- Study skills
- Lockers programme
- The Facts Planet Youth SPHE website
- Funding of youth activities
- Targeted workshops
- Mentor
- Sleep
- E safety
- Sharing information with parents
- Planning with teachers



Schools were further asked what resources were allocated to support actions arising from the Planet Youth results:

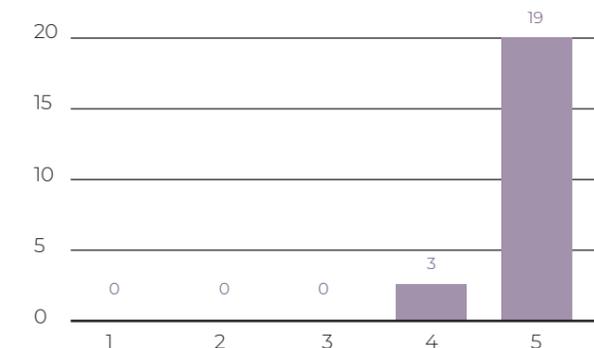
- Time only (2)
- Staff training in Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), SPHE etc. Other resources to support in-class learning
- Results from the survey of sleep patterns in young people. 3 lesson plans for SPHE classes are being prepared and we will make space for these in our SPHE programme.
- Time
- Made a poster that has been showcased throughout the province
- Wellbeing
- Researching Active Consent
- Middle Leadership post allocated to Wellbeing
- SPHE/Wellbeing Teachers were informed of the report and Planet Youth The Facts website. Teachers draw their students' attention to it in class

Finally, schools were asked to suggest improvements to the Planet Youth process and while many of the schools indicated that they have no suggestions or were happy with the Planet Youth process 'as is', the following suggestions were made:

- The idea of a few lesson plans, such as those on sleep, is very useful and could be used across a range of topics. It is a great way to 'hook' teachers on all the information available.
- One respondent stated they would love to have used the results and findings more. Unfortunately, when the booklets arrived to schools, COVID19 struck, amongst other things, so the timing was not great, nobody's fault just bad timing.
- External recorded online presentation about the results which could be shared with learners might add additional value for learners.
- Surveying 1st years to track their progress across secondary school would be very useful.
- Just keep doing it. Keep getting the information out there. Keep educating society on the real needs of the youth of today.
- It would be beneficial if a digital presentation could be provided to give feedback to students who completed the survey or other students of similar age in the school.
- Assimilation of information and how it is shared.
- Meet with parents of other year groups other than first year.
- Planet Youth's ongoing support and engagement of the schools following the surveys would improve outcomes from survey to survey.
- Include information on inclusion and racism in the report - our school population is very diverse and it would be good to have a first-hand insight into our students' experience regarding this.

Please rate your overall experience of the Planet Youth project?

22 responses



When asked to rate their overall experience of the Planet Youth project, all respondents were either very positive (19) or positive (3).

**1 = Very negative
5 = Very positive**

3.4 Parents Feedback Survey Results

ONLINE SURVEY



103

Parents Responded

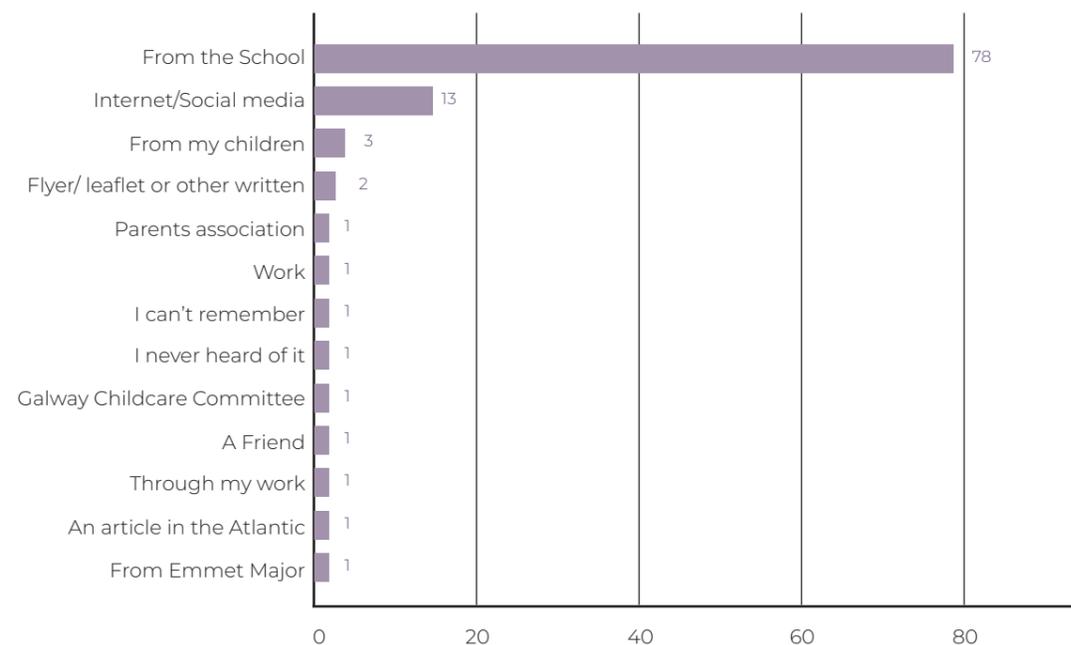
Planet Youth has built up a large database of parents from the various workshops and talks they have presented in the counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

The complete database was sent a link to the online survey.

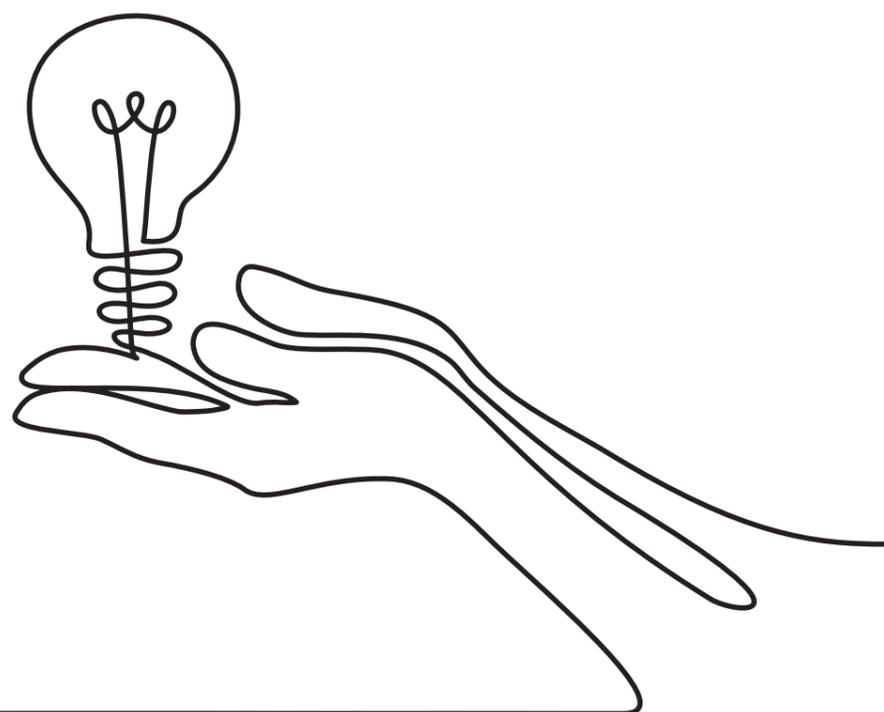


How did you find out about Planet Youth?

103 responses

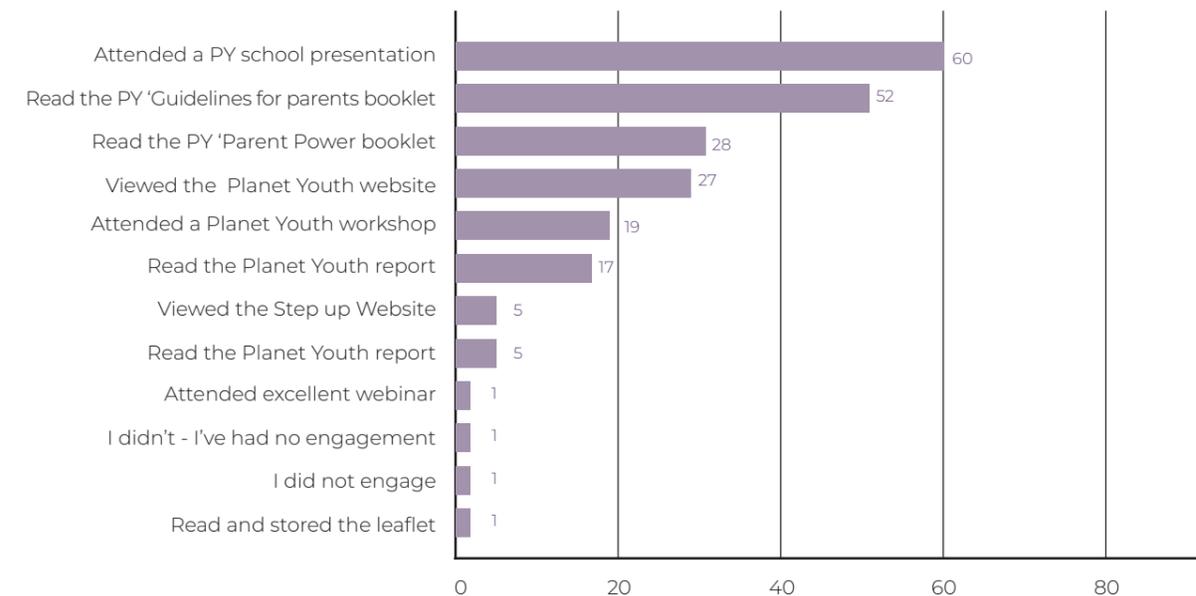


When asked how they found out about Planet Youth, a significant majority (76%) heard about the project from the child's school. A small number (13) heard about the project through Social Media with a smaller number hearing about it through their children (3) and a flyer/leaflet (2), with 10 hearing about the project from another source or not at all.



How did you engage with the Planet Youth Programme?

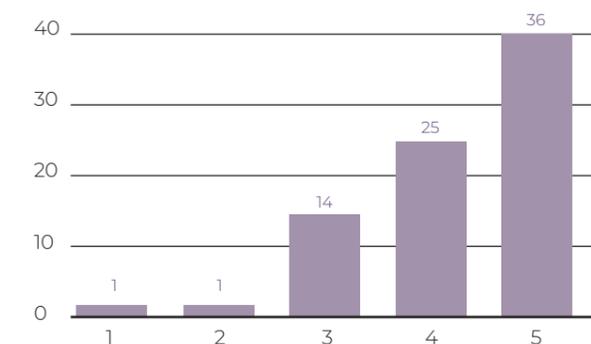
103 responses



Attending a Planet Youth school presentation and reading the Planet Youth 'Guidelines for Parents' was the type of engagement for more than half of the parents in each case, while the 'Parent Power' booklet and the website each engaged over a quarter of the parents responding. 19 parents attended a Planet Youth workshop and 17 read the Planet Youth report for their county.

If you read a booklet, how useful did you find it?

77 responses

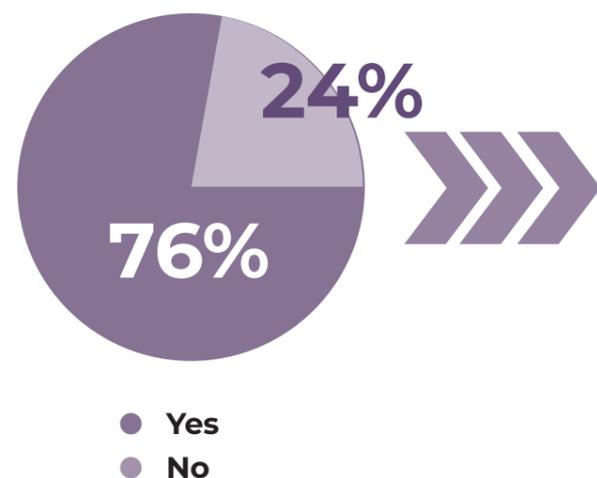


Almost half of respondents (46.8%) who read a Planet Youth booklet found it 'very useful' (5) with 38% finding it 'useful'. Very little (2%) negative feedback is in evidence.

1 = Not at all useful
5 = Very useful

Did you discuss the Planet Youth survey results with your child?

100 responses



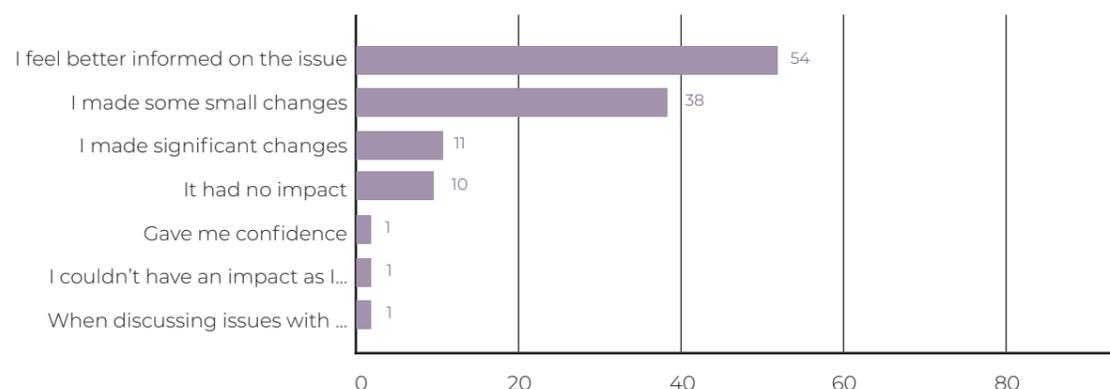
Again, a strong majority (65.7%) of people responding to the survey found they felt they understood the results 'very well/fully'.

However, just under one in five (17.5%) of respondents indicated limited or poor understanding of the Planet Youth results. In addition to this, just under a quarter (24%) of those surveyed did not discuss the Planet Youth results with their child.

This is somewhat offset by the result that only 10% indicated that it had 'no impact' on their parenting approach. 54% indicated that they felt 'better informed in the issues', 38% made 'small changes', while 11% indicated that they 'made significant changes' in their parenting approach. Two of the additional comments relate to parents having greater confidence in tackling difficult issues with their children, as a result of the Planet Youth results.

Did the Planet Youth programme have any impact on your parenting approach?

100 responses



When asked how they found out about Planet Youth, a significant majority (76%) heard about the project from their child's school. A small number (13) heard about the project through social media with a smaller number hearing about it through their children (3) and a flyer/leaflet (2), with 10 hearing about the project from another source or not at all.

Parents were asked if there were any results that they felt require immediate actions. The following issues were highlighted by parents:

- Impact of social media and phones on sleep, self-esteem and mental wellbeing (11)
- The importance of sleep times generally (10)
- Alcohol and drug issues among young people (8)
- Inclusive paid access to activities for children (2)
- High level of reported self-harm
- Holistic supports needed
- Teen behaviour
- Can't remember
- Low percentage of children involved in music, art, dance and drama
- The link between team sports and alcohol consumption
- Sexual health education
- Need for agreement between parents around sleep, social media use and staying out late

When parents were asked how they could support these actions, the following suggestions were made:

- Talking and open discussion (10)
- Earlier to bed and phones removed (9)
- Conversation with other parents/group meetings (4)
- Being present in children's lives and in touch with what they are doing (4)
- Setting time limits for connectivity/phone use (3)
- Attending workshops for parents (2)
- By more proactive parenting (2)
- Supporting off-line leisure activities
- Boundaries
- By supporting Planet Youth in practice
- Learning more about self-harm and discuss
- Critically evaluate social media
- Encouraging holding off on alcohol
- Encourage sporting organisations to reduce the focus on competition – more family focus
- Take time to read up on various items
- Through schools
- Instill confidence regarding not taking drugs/alcohol
- Feedback on behaviour of child
- Unsure
- Implement Planet Youth in the home
- Educate others

Parents were asked what would help them to follow up (more) on the findings of the Planet Youth survey, the following suggestions were made:

- More interactions/emails from Planet Youth (15)
- Continue workshops in schools (5)
- More support from other parents/network (4)
- Booklet/workshops for teens (2)
- More local/open meetings (2)
- Individual school survey (2)
- Having more time (2)
- Accessible leisure time activities including non-competitive physical activities
- Planet Youth had trust of youth
- Issues emerging that require further engagement with child
- Clearness
- Help in engaging children
- Roll out nationwide
- Never saw results



Finally, parents were asked to suggest additional ways in which Planet Youth could assist parents. The following responses were made:

- Education (5)
- Information Provision (3)
- More involvement in schools (2)
- Advertise key findings/Stronger messaging to parents (2)
- Government to introduce universal access to leisure activities for teens
- Digital use and bedtimes for kids
- Breaking down the topics. All the information together is overwhelming
- Continued advertising of webinars etc.
- Less focus on problem kids
- Giving parents a clear and visible basis on which they can 'say no' and set boundaries for kids
- Recommend online activities for kids
- Circular sent home in school bags
- Keeping the project present and alive
- Get the results to more parents
- More talks, to include teens and parents
- Tackle the overuse of mobile phones
- More public involvement of policy makers
- Sleep critical but more involved than technology
- Parents working together against the 'everyone else is doing it!' mantra
- Labhairt linn as Gaeilge
- Send 5-10 minute videos through the schools
- Schools not involved in process yet. Hope they will be soon
- More focus and funding on activities in the community
- Surveys on relevant current topics
- More emails
- Share relevant results with 6th class children before they reach secondary school
- More active discussion with parents and reminders



4

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW FEEDBACK

As part of this evaluation, key stakeholders in the Planet Youth project were interviewed on a one to one basis for their views on the project. Both the Planet Youth coordinator and the WRDATF coordinator were interviewed for their insights as well as the chairs of the Mayo and Galway County Steering Committee. Two representatives from the University of Galway who were involved with the project from the outset were interviewed as well as an independent consultant who facilitated the Stakeholder Workshop held in Tuam in May 2022.

As part of the interviews, the stakeholders were asked a series of questions pertaining to the project including:

- Did the Planet Youth pilot project do what it planned to do?
- Was there a timeline and work plan for delivery of Planet Youth?
- Is the project adequately resourced?
- How effective are committee meetings?
- How do the County Committees link with Regional Committee?
- Have the Planet Youth survey results been successful in influencing policy and services?
- Is there a need to review membership of the committee?
- What changes, if any, would you make to governance of the committee?
- What are the challenges in encouraging agencies to adopt the preventative approach of Planet Youth?
- If there are challenges, how do we address them?
- Any ideas for improving the process of Planet Youth as it is currently?
- What one significant change would you make to Planet Youth West currently?

4.1 Initial plan for the Planet Youth project

The initial plan for Planet Youth was to replicate the Icelandic model in its entirety but it was clear from the early stages of the project that this model would be difficult to fully implement in Ireland in the short term. The model was then adapted to an Irish context however key features were retained: the biennial survey of 15/16 year olds and development of preventative initiatives with the main aim to decrease substance abuse. The scope of the surveys and reporting was expanded to include reporting other health and wellbeing categories.

It was acknowledged after the first survey that more work was needed in data presentation. This feedback was reviewed and the data from subsequent surveys has been presented in a more thorough and engaging manner.

4.2 Planet Youth timeline and delivery

The pilot phase of the project was scheduled from March 2018 to March 2023 with Planet Youth Surveys taking place in 2018, 2020, and 2022. There are three key stages in the development of Planet Youth as outlined in the Planet Youth Strategy and Implementation Framework document.

Stage One	Data Collection and Analysis – Planet Youth Surveys
Stage Two	Implementing Prevention Activities
Stage Three	Reflection and Learning



4.3 Resourcing the project

The WRDATF released one of their funded workers to act as the full-time Planet Youth coordinator. This is a three-year secondment and additional funding to support this has been supplied by Tusla. The coordinator post is the main project resource, but there is additional support from the WRDATF administrator and WRDATF coordinator. A key role for the Planet Youth coordinator is to link with schools supporting them in administering the surveys as well as interpreting the results. There is funding for general information and guidance, however Planet Youth is not resourced to deliver outputs/implement changes. In the future Planet Youth could seek funding for their own actions but for now can focus on dissemination of information as well as influencing stakeholders.

It is noted that more funding is required for both increasing staff resources (data analyst/administrator/county coordinators) as well as resources to deliver outputs. It is not designed to be resourced in the current format.

Some stakeholders were of the view that the County Committees need to be utilised more effectively and not as a discussion forum. Updates could be circulated beforehand and the committees could play a more strategic role.

Regarding where the project is situated, it needs to be in a statutory agency with credibility so WRDATF is a good place for Planet Youth West at present. If it were on its own, it would not be taken seriously. The next phase needs to stay with WRDATF and then relook at where it is situated afterwards. CYPSC is a possible home for Planet Youth but CYPSC can differ from county to county.

4.4 Effectiveness of committee meetings

It was acknowledged by all the key stakeholders that data is a key strength of Planet Youth and the groups are well informed.

It was highlighted that both the Regional and County Committees need to work more effectively. In the last Regional Committee meeting it was felt that strategic issues were discussed but this had not happened prior to the last meeting. Meetings are not harnessing the potential from the members in the room. It is important to build capacity among members. Members are unsure of their role on the committees.

There needs to be a framework of engagement for committee members, a change in structure. Some stakeholders did not see the need for a Regional Committee, however some do see the need if the County Committees are restructured thematically. There is a need to revisit the terms of reference. An independent chair who knows a specific thematic area very well would be an advantage.

It was noted that committee meetings were often more focused on information updates from the coordinator rather than strategic discussion.

A regional structure is required as all senior people are there and are needed. Larger agencies such as HSE and Tusla are regional so there is a need to follow this structure in order to have those at senior level involved. A thematic structure could work well when considering restructuring of the committees.

Organisations need to see value in data. It helps them apply for funding and it is clear that proposals backed by high quality local data are more viable. There is a need to explore projects that organisations could collaborate on.

Planet Youth is addressing big cultural features of young people's lives but it has to be acknowledged that culture can't change quickly.

4.5 Linkage between County Committees and Regional Committee

The plan that ideas from a county level would feed up to regional level to be replicated has not happened. It was hoped that there would be data driven preventative work by local community groups like sports clubs, but that has not happened to date.

The Chairs of County Committees attend the Regional Committee but it is important that they report back to their respective counties. This has not worked very effectively to date. It is clear that the Regional Committee is more decisive.

Helping parents has been the most successful part of Planet Youth as Planet Youth data gives a good statistical picture for parents. Parents and families are key actors in young people's lives and benefit from the data that Planet Youth provides.

Planet Youth is trickier in Ireland than in Iceland. There were unrealistic expectations based on the Iceland model in this project. It is important that more realistic expectations are set from the outset.

4.6 Review of membership of the committees

Stakeholders felt that the committees need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis, they need a better structure. Restructuring committees by thematic groups was recommended by a number of stakeholders. It was acknowledged that there is still a need for an overseeing Regional Steering Committee.

4.7 Success in influencing policy and services

There has been success in influencing services, in particular the provision of good data to support funding applications for new projects in the region. However, it is very difficult to affect overall policies in organisations and to affect change. The focus of organisations is on targeted groups and the Icelandic prevention model looks more widely at changing the environment that young people are in. The first step that Planet Youth is taking is to build credibility and then it can seek to address policy issues. In primary prevention it is slow to see results. Agencies have to start to embed actions around primary prevention in their work. There is a need to develop Planet Youth as thought leaders and from there to influence policy. There is success in that agencies see the benefit of Planet Youth. They are using the data and they are looking forward to the next phase of the project. Tusla see the benefit of it and are part funding the coordinator role. A difficulty is that you do rely on the goodwill of staff within organisations to bring them on board. and a further challenge is in figuring out how to incorporate Planet Youth within their structures.

A key success for Planet Youth is the provision of parental information through school reports. Data is also the key strength, the point is to tell the young people's story. The bigger issue is that family needs to be at the centre as in the early prevention model, there is a need to focus on families. In order to achieve long term results it is important to change negative indicators, however funding is traditionally short term.

4.8 Changes, if any, to governance of the committees

It was suggested that committees need to be thematic in the future and not on a county basis. The committees are overly governance focussed. They appear to be built around the model of HSE or Tusla which doesn't work to Planet Youth's advantage. A number of thematic areas are needed for sub committees. They can reduce meeting time to one hour then. The committees are difficult to chair at present and there is no accountability.

Membership includes statutory and non-statutory organisations who work with young people – this is still the intention.

Planet Youth needs to be more policy driven. The County Council and HSE need to draw on Planet Youth data as a criterion for funding applications. Good data informs intelligent intervention – data is there to guide people to find pressure points.

It was felt that there are too many committees and that it is hard to know how to link the county with the regional. One suggestion was to keep the Regional Committee and link in with Tusla, CYPSC or some other local structures for the implementation of outputs.

4.9 Key challenges to encouraging agencies to adapt the preventative approach of Planet Youth

A key challenge is that Planet Youth is not built into organisations' work plans. Also, it was noted that the Government does not invest in long term initiatives. It was also noted that youth work is targeted predominately at immediate needs. The National Drugs Strategy has only recently allocated resources to prevention work, it had not done so previously. The challenges are cultural in that every organisation is busy with their own work and is constrained in how they respond to Planet Youth. Unless the issue is an emergency, it will not get the attention from organisations. They are not properly seeing the problem. It will be difficult to change this, there is a need for sustained lobbying. Planet Youth needs to become a name that is a 'thought leader' and trusted so that people will listen. Buy in is needed at high levels in organisations.

When considering the Hardiker model, it is clear that agencies are focussed on level 2/level 3 and have no budgets/work plans for preventative actions. When they are dealing with people in crisis, they respond directly instead of thinking 'how do I stop this from getting to a crisis'. The preventative approach is difficult to grasp for people.

4.10 How to address challenges

Planet Youth has the challenges of always remaining visible and relevant and encouraging agencies to stay committed to what is a long-term project. Getting ongoing buy-in and support for Planet Youth will require a sustained effort and a variety of approaches. By demonstrating the benefits and impact of the data, of prevention work, of collaboration across existing organisations, and by building political support, Planet Youth can work towards creating a culture that values primary prevention approaches and prioritises the well-being of young people.

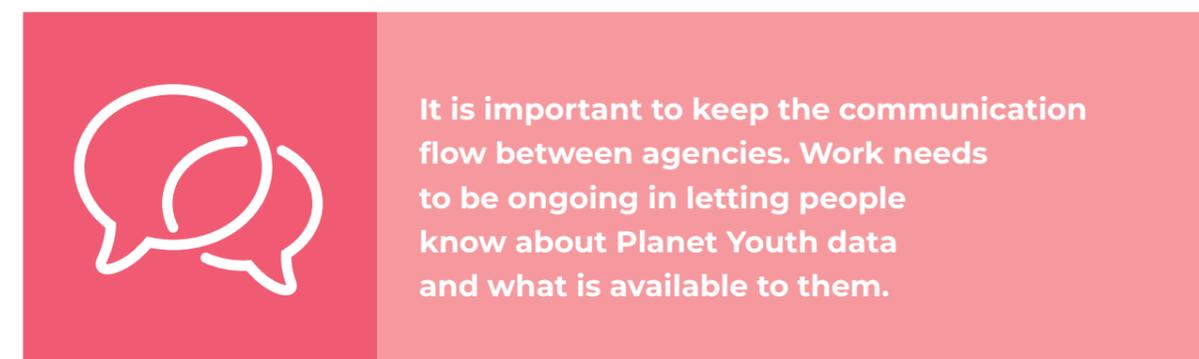
Planet Youth also needs to build on its work with parents. Increasing public awareness and education about the importance of prevention work can help to create a culture that values and promotes initiatives like Planet Youth.

4.11 Ideas for improving the current process of Planet Youth

It is important to keep the communication flow between agencies. Work needs to be ongoing in letting people know about Planet Youth data and what is available to them. There needs to be constant communication with the schools in particular as if some schools are not taking it on board the communication needs to be maintained with them.

County Committees should be structured around thematic outcomes, as well as identifying champions of themes who will push things ahead in subcommittees.

Planet Youth is complicated as it involves cultural change within organisations. Regarding policy, there is a need to move towards an evidenced informed paradigm. A reduction in problems would be apparent down the line.



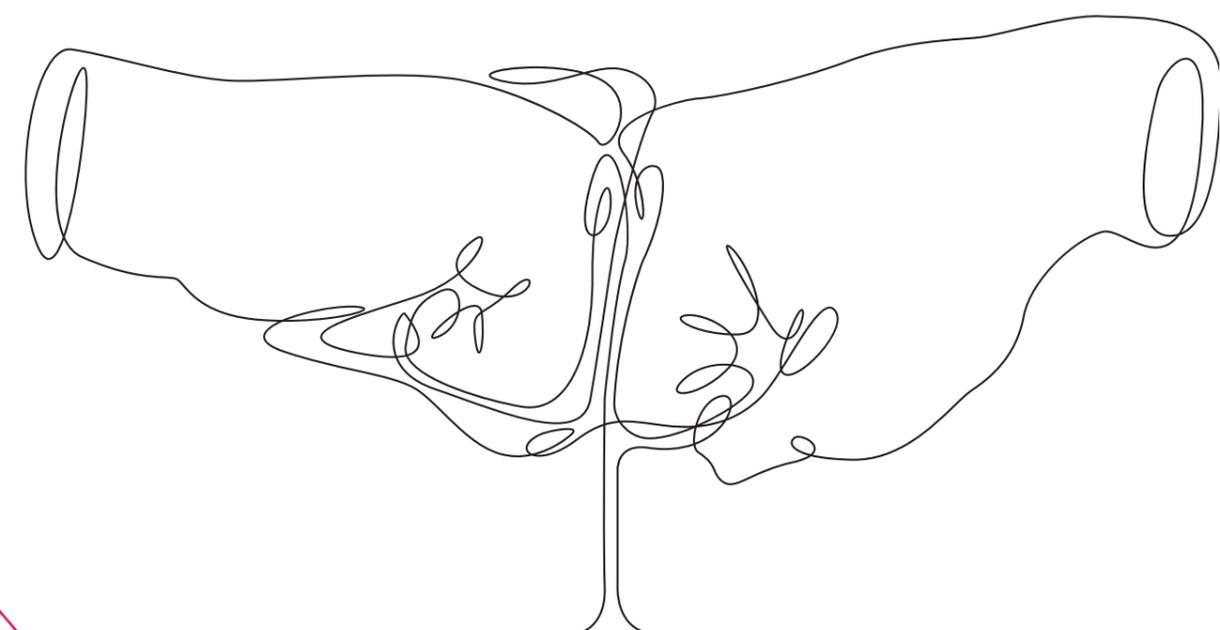
It is important to keep the communication flow between agencies. Work needs to be ongoing in letting people know about Planet Youth data and what is available to them.

The key issue now is what can we do at primary level. There is a need to provide parents with tools, for example, regarding phone usage. The recovery of family structure is very important, there is a need to locate child wellbeing within this structure.

Political will is needed and other statutory organisations needs to champion Planet Youth, County Councils for example. It is believed that the Planet Youth project is too marginal within policy structures, it needs stronger statutory grounding.

4.12 One significant change you would make to Planet Youth

- It is important that Planet Youth becomes much more than a substance use prevention project
- There is a need to pitch Planet Youth at a national level
- Expansion of parenting programmes needed
- A higher level group is required to drive it forward
- A team of workers is required – as well as the coordinator, an administrator and data analyst are needed
- Build capacity of stakeholders to engage with the primary prevention model – it is important to engage with individuals and committees as to the rationale for the project
- Realign structures to what is there already – there is a need to embed in existing structures but to have a Regional Steering Committee



5 KEY FINDINGS

In this section we present a summary of the key findings of the research with each of the key stakeholder groups, including Regional and County Committees, Schools, Parents and Key Individuals/Stakeholders involved in the design, planning and implementation of the Planet Youth project.

5.1 Summary of findings from Regional and County Committees

Feedback from the committee surveys showed there is a need to make structures more effective with the idea of thematic groups mentioned by many respondents. The link between County and Regional Committees causes some confusion. Respondents felt that the membership also needs to be reviewed. There is a good understanding of the Planet Youth data and the Icelandic model, but less so on how to develop it into actions.

The respondents noted that the overwhelming strength of the Planet Youth project is the data, and it is used by organisations for funding applications, research, developing workplans, lobbying and advocacy and developing policies. The strong links made with parents were also noted.

Weaknesses identified include lack of resources, culture of the organisations towards prioritising primary prevention work, and keeping Planet Youth on the agenda. The majority recorded that Planet Youth's success in data collection was not matched by implementation actions. Suggestions to strengthen Planet Youth were:

- Commitment from agencies (HSE, Tusla, Local Authorities) to include early intervention, evidence based practice in their programmes
- Reconfigure County Committees into thematic groups, allowing the Regional Committee to focus on oversight
- Clarify what success in 2024/5 would look like and adhere to that
- Additional resources to allow lobbying and engagement with national policy
- A coordinator/administrator in each county
- Input from An Garda Síochána on drug use and/or youth safety approaches

5.2 Summary of findings from schools

All schools reported that the students reacted positively or very positively to the Planet Youth survey, and that the results were fed back to the school in an understandable way. The schools shared the results with school management and staff in all cases, with slightly over half also sharing them with the Parents Associations/Councils. Only 5 schools shared the results with all parents. Less than a third of schools shared results with the students who had been the subject of the survey. Less than half organised a meeting of stakeholders to plan how to respond to the Planet Youth results, which may indicate a need for a more strategic approach for schools.

The majority of schools implemented recommendations in the school report. The majority of programmes/policies developed in response to Planet Youth results were wellbeing, mental health and SPHE programmes. Other schools incorporated results into their first year information talks. The main improvement suggested was in relation to communication of results to students, with many suggesting an online presentation of results. Schools noted that ongoing support and engagement from Planet Youth to support implementation of actions would help.

5.3 Summary of findings from parents

Parents were very positive about Planet Youth with the majority describing the talk or workshop they attended as useful or very useful. The Planet Youth data in the vast majority of cases impacted in some way on their parenting, from 'being better informed' and 'making small changes' to 'making significant changes'. Parents would like to see action on some of the findings as soon as possible, notably the impact of social media/phones on sleep, as well as impact of lack of sleep generally, and on self esteem issues and mental health well-being. Follow on interactions from Planet Youth and more ongoing work in schools were cited by parents as ways of best helping them. Many parents noted that schools need to be more involved in supporting follow on actions. Stronger messaging to parents generally on the findings from the data was also suggested.

5.4 Summary of findings from stakeholder interviews

Key stakeholders in the Planet Youth project acknowledged that the original plan to replicate the Icelandic model had to be adapted to the local Irish context. They noted that Planet Youth is not sufficiently resourced to deliver outputs or implement changes. There is a need for more resources and a team of staff to deliver the project across the region. It was acknowledged by all key stakeholders that the data is the key strength of Planet Youth. Engaging with parents has also been a success.

They highlighted that the Regional and County Committees need to work more effectively. There needs to be a framework of engagement for committee members in order to get best value from them. The committees need to look again at their terms of reference and membership. There was widespread support for the regional structure as it has key senior people on it. Capacity building work with all committees needs to be conducted.

The fact that Planet Youth is a more long-term project was acknowledged, as was the need to change cultures in relation to the primary prevention approach. Additional work needs to be undertaken to demonstrate to organisations the value of the Planet Youth data and to guide them on suitable interventions reflecting the data findings.

Restructuring committees by thematic groups was recommended by a number of stakeholders. These could then feed up to the Regional Committee. The other option worth exploring is to link in to existing structures on the ground such as CYPSC, to give Planet Youth the stronger statutory footing, and prevent replication.

The issue of targeting needs and focusing on those at high risk was identified as a factor which does not assist the preventative approach of Planet Youth work. Addressing this requires high level buy in at Government Department levels to affect change in funding focus and culture. Improvements in impacts of Planet Youth can also be focussed on work in schools and with parents. Supporting intervention actions in schools and also parenting programmes will be key.

5.5 Planet Youth SWOT Analysis



6 RECOMMENDATIONS

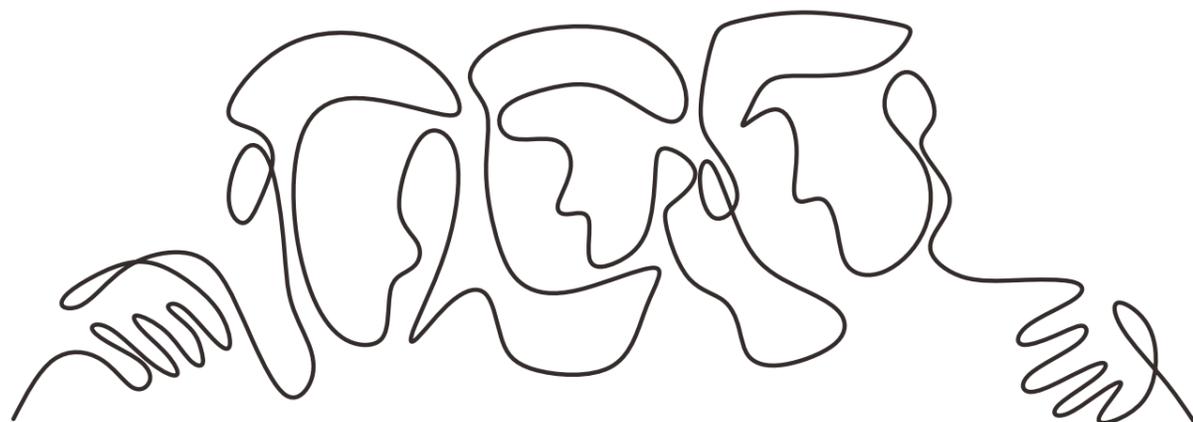
Arising from the research undertaken in this evaluation of the Planet Youth Project, the following recommendations are made:

6.1 Funding

- Additional funding is needed for the Planet Youth project in order that extra staff can be employed. The current model of one coordinator for the 3 counties is not sufficient to sustain the project. Options could include individual county coordinators or division of the workload by additional staff with roles of coordinator, data analyst, administrator, and social media/website manager.
- Increased funding to deliver outputs of Planet Youth and allow for additional work on creating initiatives for use by schools, parents, peers, leisure time and local community.

6.2 Structures

- Restructure the committees to make them more effective. There is a need to adopt a thematic structure whereby there are a number of groups regionally looking at themes and these feed into the overarching regional committee. Themes would include key areas such as schools, peers, parents, leisure time and local community etc.
- Capacity building for committee members to ensure full value from the members is achieved.



6.3 Role clarification

- It is important to be clear on the role and mission of Planet Youth. Does it continue its work on generating data, and then informing and promoting the data, or does it implement primary prevention measures.

6.4 Schools

- Raise the profile in schools. Schools to consider having a dedicated in-school person responsible for Planet Youth and developing initiatives from it.
- Work with schools to disseminate results and to use the results in a strategic way.

6.5 Youth services

- Focus on youth services, informal education services to ensure hearing from harder to reach young people.

6.6 Parents

- Develop increased awareness through Parents Associations/school apps.
- Develop parenting programmes in line with the survey data.

6.7 Stakeholders

- Educate organisations and key personnel on need for preventative approach to help a paradigm shift in culture of organisations.
- Education of stakeholders on understanding Planet Youth data and how to implement actions from the findings.

6.8 Project expansion

- Broaden survey to include questions on experience of discrimination. From 2020, a specific question was asked about racism in the schools' survey. It would be beneficial to expand this to find out about other forms of discrimination.
- Promote more brand recognition of Planet Youth via media work.
- Develop Planet Youth to include all four domains of intervention: school; parents; peers; leisure time and local community (to date Planet Youth has engaged mainly with parents and schools).

6.9 Next level

- Work on political buy in. High level champions to advocate the Planet Youth approach at all levels.
- Planet Youth would benefit from a coordinated national approach to ensure a consistent approach across future Planet Youth projects.

7 CONCLUSION

The many strengths of the Planet Youth project were evident from this evaluation. It is clear that it merits ongoing support and expansion in order to build on the invaluable work completed to date. Despite funding constraints, it achieved significant impacts and with sufficient resources it could make a real and lasting impact on young people growing up in the West of Ireland.

The WRDATF is a suitable location for Planet Youth and it can grow and develop from here in the next round of the project. The feedback from this evaluation points to the value of exploring the possibilities of moving Planet Youth into existing structures that will give it a stronger statutory footing, which can be revisited at a later stage.



The many strengths of the Planet Youth project were evident from this evaluation. It is clear that it merits ongoing support and expansion in order to build on the invaluable work completed to date.

The success of the data gathering was lauded by all but work in the next round of the project can be focussed more on the implementation of preventative actions and developing interventions within all four domains: schools, parents, peers, leisure time and local community.

Ensuring all agencies and organisations are aware of the data and how to use it for preventative actions can be expanded in the next round. All of this development is contingent on additional funding and resources to allow for staff time to complete this work.

This evaluation, whilst limited in resources and time, gives an insight into the Planet Youth project from the point of view of all stakeholders, agencies, parents and schools. It will be valuable to complete an outcomes evaluation at a later date to see how the project has impacted on young people themselves. As other Planet Youth projects emerge in different parts of the country, linking with them will be beneficial to ensure a consistent approach, and to grow the impact of the project at a national level. This will help to ensure the cultural change needed toward investment in the primary preventative approach.



Evaluation of the Planet Youth Project in Galway, Mayo & Roscommon 2018 - 2022

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