



# National Youth Volunteering Portfolio

## MyVP



**Participating in volunteering plays a crucial role** in shaping the lives of young people, contributing significantly to informed and active citizens, the cultivation of successful learners and developing individuals with confidence who engage in deep learning across various domains.

Rooted in a broad, holistic understanding of education, Localise Youth Volunteering programmes provide a **liminal space** that amplifies personal, social, educational and economic outcomes for young people.

**Building empathy** and awakening **prosocial behaviours** through volunteering for post-covid adolescents takes on extra significance as they are facing urgent personal and societal challenges, highlighted, and broadened by the impact of multiple crises, disinformation, and a growing racist undercurrent in Ireland.

The overwhelming majority of young people express **aspirations** to pursue Further or Higher Education (ERSI). However, there exists a significant contrast between secondary school students in affluent areas - where up to 99% of young people pursue higher education - and those in less privileged areas, where the percentage decreases to as low as 10%. (HEA)

There exists an **opportunity** to acknowledge volunteering achievements as a pathway to Further and Higher Education and employment for young people from migrant backgrounds and those from socio-economically disadvantaged areas. Enhancing **social mobility** entails recognising and nurturing the talents of all young people, as well as reducing barriers to educational opportunities and addressing biases that contribute to inequity in educational access.



# Introduction

# Purpose

**The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio** has emerged from Localise Youth Volunteering, which has been **empowering young people** to be of service to their communities since 1972.

As Ireland's National Youth Volunteering Agency, **working in and through schools and youth services**, Localise is changing the lens through which volunteering is viewed. We are achieving this by awakening a culture of active citizenship and pro-social behaviours through our planned programmes of education, and, by reimagining Ireland's educational system to value and recognise the skills developed through volunteering, and, by presenting the opportunity to young people to develop personalised youth volunteering digital portfolios.

The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio **www.myvp.ie** will allow young people build a profile of themselves through the prism of volunteerism. The platform provides young people with a space and a place to record their achievements, store their certificates of achievement, have their skills and attributes endorsed, outline their key learnings, reflect on their experiences and **outline a vision for their future**.

Certain courses of study in Further and Higher Education will take into consideration National Youth Volunteering Portfolio as evidence of accomplishments **when allocating places for study**.



# Vision

Our vision is of a nation where all young people can have the **opportunity** to volunteer locally and become pro-active citizens and community leaders. Our mission is to enable young people, through voluntary action, to care in their community and be of **service to others**.

We aim to **awaken a culture** of service and volunteering in young people, to promote inclusion and integration through social engagement, to enable young people to develop their skills and realise their self-worth, to contribute to the development of a **caring compassionate society** and to empower young people to be decision makers, change makers and valued contributors to society.

Volunteering during adolescence takes on an outsized importance as pivotal **psychological and psychosocial transformations** occur. These include the formation of personal identity, the establishment of a value system, enhanced perspective-taking skills, increased introspective abilities, growing personal independence, greater emphasis on peer relationships, and the acquisition of skills and coping strategies to navigate challenges and crises.

The **bottleneck of opportunity** that faces many young people in Ireland today is exasperated by the barriers to educational advancement. Young people from disadvantage communities often experience a range of risk factors which impact negatively on their ability to get the most from their education.

Increasing the potential for social mobility through the National Youth Volunteering Portfolio means that the talents of all young people are recognised and nurtured, and that the **inequity of educational opportunities are reduced**.

The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio is a **pragmatic solution** that captures a view of the whole person through their volunteering contributions. It has the capacity to make a real and lasting difference lives of young people who may not otherwise advance through education.

# Who is it for?

**This initiative is open to young people up to the age of 23.** The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio has the capacity to record, recognise and reaffirm the attributes, skills and learning gained through volunteerism, as a constant record of life events through this lens. It holds particular relevance for employability and as a record of the transversal skills in demand in the workplaces of the future.

Utilising the National Youth Volunteering Portfolio as an educational advancement tool, we prioritise people that have attended a **DEIS banded Post-Primary Schools** and those that are from communities of **first and second-generation migrants**, youth aged International Protection applicants, Beneficiaries of International Protection, and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. We identify communities that have high levels of first and second generation migrants through the Department of Justice and CSO statistics.

As such, this **targeted initiative** which aims to diversify representation in Higher Education across **socio-economic and migrant diversity spectrums**. As of 2023, there are 235 post-primary schools with designated DEIS status, serving over 240,000 young people. We also target youth services such as BRYR Ballymun and YouthReach to ensure that this opportunity is available to their service users.

Migrant organisations such as the YES programme that works with youth aged International Protection applicants and areas where there are significantly high levels of first- and second-generation migrants are of particular interest.

This targeted approach will help advance equity of access to Higher Education so that the student body, at all levels and across all programmes, **reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.**

# How It Works

**Upon completion of the Localise programme**, participants are given a unique numerical code which they use to open their own MyVP.

MyVP has a number of sections through which young people can build a profile of themselves **through the prism of volunteering**.

- **About Me** - this section is a short introduction to the person.
- **My Volunteering Experiences** is prepopulated using the unique code – this a broad outline of projects undertaken.
- **My Vision** is a space for elucidating the aspirations of young people and their ambitions to pursue higher education.
- **My Reflection/Key Learning** this is a crucial section where young people reflect on their learning because of volunteerism. It is important to note that the quantity of volunteering is secondary to the learning experienced.
- **My Volunteering Highlights** is a space to expand on any extra volunteering they have undertaken.
- **My Skills & My Attributes** highlight transversal skills and personal attributes gained by the young person because of volunteering.

The information recorded is the sole property of the young person, only they have the ability to alter it and their profiles can only be viewed by others if they choose to share it.



**Proof of Concept phase**

# The Proof-of-Concept Phase

As part of the National Youth Volunteering Portfolio proof-of-concept phase we are working in collaboration with Dublin City University, and with a number of Post-Primary Schools, Further Education Colleges and with Youth Services.

## Further Education

**Further Education** plays a vital role in preparing learners for success at university. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that the ‘academic grit’ gained is a key performance indicator in a learners perseverance in studying regardless of socio-cultural issues and obstacles faced.

It is our aspiration that when a young person enters an FE college with a National Youth Volunteering Portfolio that this will enable a potential pathway to Further Education.

Following the successful completion of their chosen FE course, and when they meet the entry criteria of their chosen undergraduate course, they will be guaranteed an interview with DCU for their preferred undergraduate course. CAO points will not be a requirement.

As it stands more than 200 young people have created their MyVP profile. They come from a range of schools and youth services (listed overleaf). We expect that many of these young people will achieve their educational aspirations through established mechanisms, and that approximately 10% will avail of this opportunity.

With the support of the Further Education sector we can progress the proof of concept phase to the expanded pilot so that this pathway reduces the barriers to education and addresses the biases that contribute to inequity in educational access.

## The Pilot Phase

Following the proof-of-concept phase we will be expanding the programme to include Trinity College, University College Dublin, and University of Galway, with a view to aligning MyVP with their various admissions policies and practices.

## The Working Group

Our consultation working group includes representatives from Dublin City University, Trinity College, University College Dublin, and University of Galway, several Primary and Post Primary School principals, and experts in the Further Education field.

**For the proof of concept phase we are working with DCU and have identified the following provisional undergraduate courses that follow on from Further Education courses.**

### **DCU Undergraduate Courses**

- Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor of Education (Primary Teaching)
- Education and Training
- Foundation Programme in Education and Training
  
- Sport Science and Health
- Athletic Therapy and Training
- Health and Society
  
- Higher Diploma in Children's Nursing
- Nursing (Mental Health)
- Nursing (General)
- Nursing (Children's and General integrated)
- Nursing (Intellectual Disability)
- Certificate in Peer Support Working in Mental Health
  
- Homeless Prevention and Intervention
  
- Multimedia
- Communication Studies
- Social Sciences and Cultural Innovation
  
- Data Science
- Computer Science

**Marino College Secondary School  
Beneavin De La Salle College  
St Pauls C.B.S.  
Larkin Community College  
Mount Carmel Secondary School  
Luttrellstown Community College  
Ballyrunners  
BRYR Ballymun  
YES (Youth Education Service for  
refugees and migrants)**



### **Whitehall College of Further Education**

Pre-University Social Care  
Certificate in Early Learning and Care Stage 1  
Nursing Studies  
Healthcare Assistant  
Education and Training (delivered collaboratively with Whitehall and DCU)  
Data Analytic Science

### **Cathal Brugha FET Campus**

Nursing Studies  
Certificate in Early Learning and Care  
Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care  
Classroom Assistant / Special Needs Assistant

### **Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of Further Education**

Nursing Pre-University  
Pre-University Sport Science  
Sport Rehabilitation and Exercise Therapy  
Early Learning and Care  
Inclusive Education and Training  
Pre-Primary & Post-Primary School Teaching  
Social Care

### **Coláiste Íde College of Further Education**

ELC - Level 5 Certificate in Early Learning and Care  
Health and Physical Activity Level 6 (Sports, Recreation & Exercise)

### **Dunboyne College of Further Education**

Pre-University Science  
Pre-University Sports  
Science Pre-University Teaching  
Pre-University Nursing with Midwifery Option  
Computer Systems and Networks  
Early Childhood Care and Education

### **Inchicore College of Further Education**

Nursing Studies/ Children's Nursing Level 5  
Healthcare Service Skills Level 5  
Social Studies Level 5  
Social Studies Level 6  
Social Care Diploma Level 6+  
Computer Applications and Mobile Technologies Level 5  
Business Studies and Digital Marketing Level 5  
Strength and Conditioning for Sport – Level 5  
Sports Coaching: Fitness Instructor Level 5  
Sports Coaching: Personal Trainer Level 6  
Sports Science Diploma Level 6+

**For the proof of concept phase we have provisionally identified the following Further Education courses that have relevance to DCU undergraduate courses**

The 2021 UNESCO Report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education chaired by Her Excellency Sahle-Work Zewde **Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education** calls for the expansion and enriching of educational opportunities that take place throughout life and in different cultural and social spaces. It outlines its desire for a new value dynamic, recognising the educative importance of learning outside of the classroom.

The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio aims to provide a **coherent joined-up support** to inclusion throughout the education system and consequently across society. As a nation of volunteers (approx. 720,000 adults volunteer annually CSO 2022), The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio has the capacity to record, recognise and reaffirm the attributes, skills and learning gained through volunteerism, as a constant record of life events through this lens. As such it has synergies with the **Digital Wallet** in Ireland and the proposed EU-wide electronic identification Digital Wallet.

**StudentVolunteer.ie** is a one-stop-shop portal connecting higher education students with civil society organisation volunteering opportunities. There is potential for synchronising both platforms so that there is a coherent recording and recognition of volunteering events as people progress through higher education.

**Volunteering Ireland** connects adults with volunteering opportunities nationwide. Here again lies potential to synchronise with the **i-Vol** platform so that there is a coherent recording and recognition as people volunteer throughout life.

**Europass** is your set of online tools that helps people manage their learning and career. There is scope for the National Youth Volunteering Portfolio to surface on various eportfolio platforms, including **Youthpass**, as evidence of youth volunteering. The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio has the potential to influence the development of a Europewide Youth Volunteering Portfolio.

**Gaisce**, the President's Award is a self-development programme for young people aged 14-25, in the challenge area of Community Involvement there is scope for The National Youth Volunteering Portfolio to support and endorse volunteering activities undertaken by young people.

As members of the **National Volunteering Strategy** Implementation Group (Youth Working Group) we are working towards realising Strategic Objective 1.4 which aims to 'Deliver an educational programme in partnership with youth organisations and Educational Bodies. While many young people volunteer through youth work and sports groups there is need to change the perception and encourage participation of volunteering among younger people, including those in higher education'

# Scope



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