

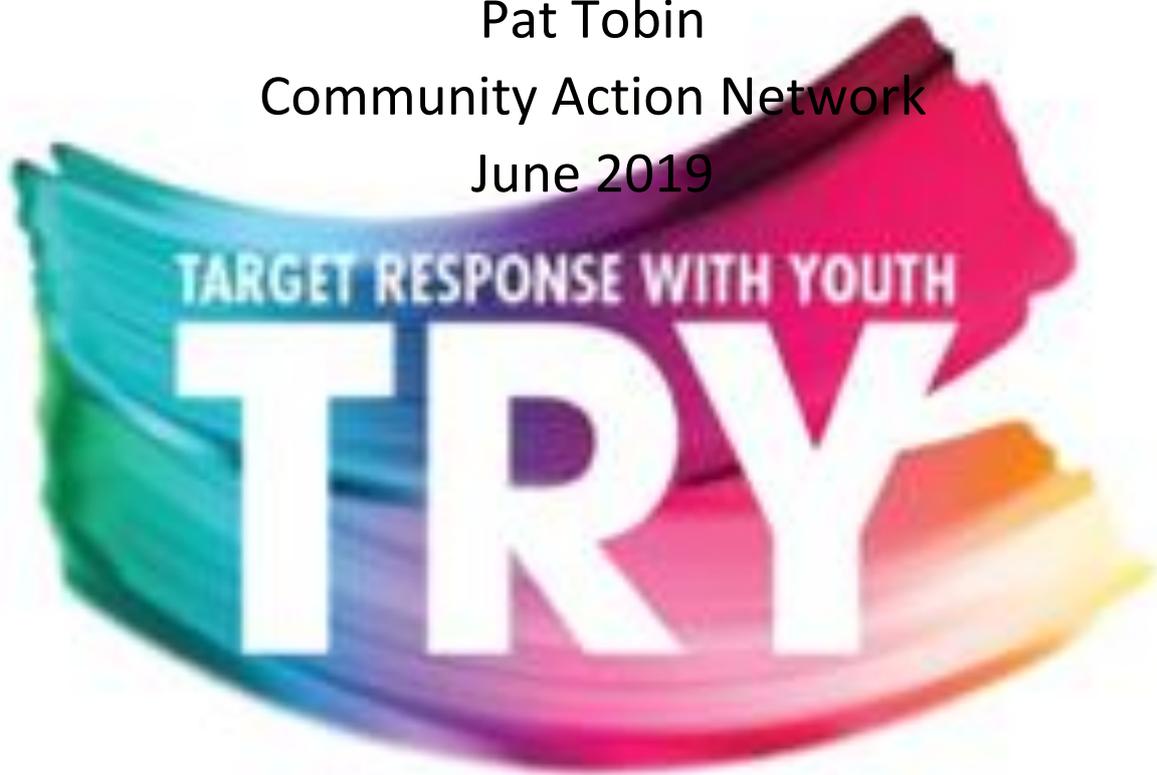
Evaluation of
St. Teresa's Garden Targeted
Response to Youth(TRY) Project

By

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Community Action Network

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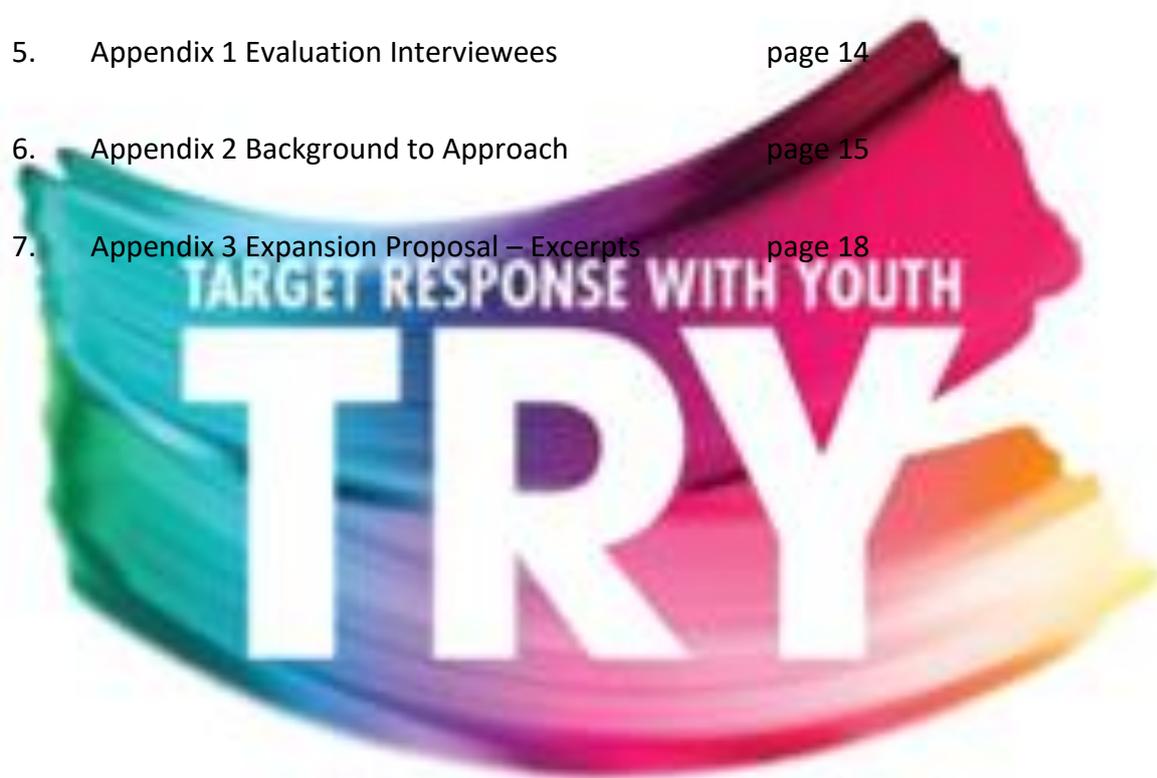
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1. Purpose of this Evaluation

To capture the experience – achievements, challenges and learnings of the TRY project. The evaluation will be conducted in the context of it being at a crucial time in its development and in need of a commitment of resources to continue.

1.2 Evaluation Method

This evaluation was carried out through interviews with the young men engaged with the TRY programme and the staff and other agencies with whom the project collaborates. They were asked about their direct experience of the project, their view of the approach used and to talk about project strengths and challenges. Community representatives and statutory agencies and other members of the St. Teresa's Garden's Regeneration Board were asked about their experiences of the TRY project in general and to consider its strengths and challenges. A full list of those spoken to are in Appendix 1.

The report is presented in three parts. Firstly, the outcome of the interviews regarding experience of the project is talked about and secondly four themes that emerged in the course of the interviews that were further explored are presented. Finally, recommendations are made based on the findings.

2. The TRY Project

2.1 Background to TRY

TRY is a response adopted by St. Teresa's Gardens Regeneration Board, initially on a very limited pilot basis targeting a group of young men who were engaged in anti-social behaviour, poly-drug misuse and public drug dealing in the flats complex. The idea was born out of the Board's high level of concern and frustration with the level of anti-social behaviour and its effects on residents and on the potential for regeneration. Policing and estate management weren't achieving sustainable results, so it was agreed that the Board should adopt a third branch to its strategy, that would encompass a more care orientated approach of outreach to those that were responsible for the anti-social behaviour. Agreement on this strategy took time as there was a belief that it could be seen to condone anti-social behaviour and give conflicting messages to younger teenagers. In addition, most of the group no longer lived in St. Teresa's Gardens though all had connections. It was agreed to pilot an approach that was different from other more traditional youth work approaches. The model used *intensive outreach* and *bridging* and was already shown to have successful outcomes in Stockholm and Ballymun. Dublin City Council (DCC) agreed to fund the initiative and the Donore Avenue Community Drug Team (DACDT) agreed to host the project as it already had a relationship with some of the young men but found that their approach didn't meet their needs. The Project Leader would also provide support to the staff. The project would be housed in the Community Centre on Donore Avenue. There were sufficient funds for five months operation, contracting two staff to work eight hours per week.

This very limited pilot ran for five months, finishing in August 2017, and was evaluated. The evaluation was extremely positive and showed the potential of the project. It was decided not to continue funding the project when the pilot ended as the Regeneration Board had commissioned a Social Regeneration planning process and Dublin City Council wanted to see

if TRY would fit within the Social Regeneration Plan. Following the completion of the Social Regeneration plan¹, which strongly recommended a recommencement of TRY, the project was reinstated and began in May 2018.

A significant injection of funding by Dublin City Council and additional funding from the Cork Street Fund allowed the project to increase the hours from sixteen to thirty two per week, still with two workers engaging the target group. Both staff who had worked with the project in 2017 now had other work and two new staff were contracted, one commencing work in May and the other in November 2018. One of the earlier staff members now works in a full time, related position in the STG area and as part of it is able to support the work of TRY.

2.2 What is Targeted Response to Youth? (TRY)

TRY was inspired by tried and tested programme of intensive outreach and engagement with young people participating in groupings active in anti-social-behaviour and criminality in the Ballymun area. That programme is influenced by Lugna Gattan (Easy Street) a programme run by the Fryshuset organisation in Sweden. See Appendix 2 for further description.

TRY uses an Outreach and Bridging model in its practice, it

- emphasises on-street relationship building and so reaches a target group which centre-based activities won't reach
- works with all age groups; many of the target group range in age from young teens to adults in their mid-twenties. TRY outreaches to all members of a group who are connected to anti-social behaviour in a community.
- is not restricted by address. Many of the target group do not live in the area where they do harm though they may have connections there. TRY follows the group wherever they locate and does not differentiate according to their personal address.
- is not restricted by "presenting issue". TRY works with any challenges for those involved in anti-social groupings. It is not focused on their drug issue or their homelessness issue or any one presenting issue. It seeks to bridge each person to the set of services or supports they need.
- values and relies on collaboration with other services as the model depends on them to have services and supports from which to avail and to build further supports for those that are referred.

2.3 Profile of the target group.

Currently TRY is targeting young men, mostly aged around twenty, who make up a loose network who "hang out" together around the consolidation blocks and other adjacent areas of St Teresa's Gardens. They are rarely all together and are often found in groups of around six to eight. Almost all use alcohol excessively, a particularly potent type of cannabis and benzodiazepines, along with weekend cocaine use. None see themselves as having a drug problem or addiction. Addiction is perceived in a more stereotypical fashion where someone is addicted to heroin and has the accompanying lifestyle. The core of the group are regular drug-dealers and use the public stairs, balconies and courtyard at St. Teresa's for trading.

¹ Quality Matters St Teresa's Gardens five-year social regeneration plan 2018 St Teresa's Gardens Regeneration Board

All of them are unemployed and most have low attainments in education. They are all involved in the drug economy, albeit to different degrees. The drug economy is seen as a viable alternative to labour market participation and particularly so in the absence of educational qualifications and sustainable, long term employment in trades and manufacturing. Most are also in trouble with the law and some have several charge sheets. Some have served prison sentences and prison is generally not a deterrent to illegal activity as it is often an opportunity to increase one's networks for better connections on release. In their relationship to the drug trade they are not alone, or unusual and similar groups now operate in communities all over Dublin and beyond. They are also connected to bigger crime gangs. This serves to normalise their activity and provide an income to young people to access consumer goods wanted by most.

Many have very low self esteem and the traits that are part of that. Mental health issues are presenting for many in the group, with a number appearing depressed and one has had hospital admissions.

Most have been fathers from a young age and relationships with their children and their partner vary.

Around five of the group live in the complex and more have extended family there. Others live in the wider Donore Avenue area or Crumlin and one lives between addresses in the North Inner City and the local area. Most live with their family of origin or have it as their main base.

2.4 The project in practice

The project engages with eighteen young men in two half-day sessions where the staff are working together on the same days. They have developed key relationships with group members, strategically targeting those who play a leadership role. They are now in trustful relationships with some and developing relationships with others. Project staff work at a range of levels with the young men

- one to one within which they are getting to know someone, building relationship and trust, through talking on the street, playing football in the flats or over pool
- one to one within which they are supporting someone to deal with life situations that cause difficulty or challenge such as presenting at a social welfare office or other formal meeting; coaching/mentoring the young man so that such situations can be more productive
- one to one where they are working through a presenting issue with someone
- in a group situation in the centre where the young men are welcome for breakfast on a weekly basis
- in a group out on social activities.

Central to all these situations is relationship and trust building. Through relationships built and trust gained the two staff members have been able to link individuals into educational and employment opportunities and into therapeutic services such as counselling of different types. Time needed to build relationships was emphasised by both staff members.

Another key feature of the project is that the staff are people with whom the young men can identify as they are slow to trust and have mostly negative experiences of services.

Identification comes from some similar background and life experiences and capacity to empathise with the young men's life experience.

They described some instances also where young men were bridged into what appeared to be suitable services but were ended quickly when they weren't a suitable fit for them. The staff came to realise that this is part of their process of finding out what is the most appropriate bridge for each young man. Their response is to start again and follow what it is the young man wants to address. While there have been false starts they have been followed by some very successful interventions where participants have found what suits them. Core to bridging is providing practical support and accompaniment to the young men. This support consists of being present for the young men at critical times, mostly when they think they may not make a journey alone such as turning up for an appointment that they fear or from which they have been barred in the past or getting up very early in the morning for an exam. Not only does this provide practical support but it demonstrates to the young man that someone believes enough in him to do this for him. The hope is that he also begins to have that belief in himself and in many instances, it does have this effect.

Some examples in practice to illustrate the work

- *A* has a serious polydrug use problem, especially benzodiazepines and is prone to chaotic, sometimes violent behaviour. TRY had him placed on a local drug rehabilitation project, but the placement broke down after a violent incident. TRY arranged for him to participate in four anger management sessions which he voluntarily attended. He is being lined up for an educational programme currently.
- *B* had been a core participant in the drug dealing, using intimidation on those buying drugs to extract payment. TRY had him placed on a construction related course and has successfully gained this young man full time employment through networking and working in collaboration with agencies that employ building labourers. This in turn keeps the individual from congregating in the flat complex dealing drugs reducing harm all round in the community.
- *C* is a very unstable younger man, facing charges for a serious assault. TRY had collaborated with another education and training service and is preparing him for residential drug treatment in Coolmine Therapeutic Community on a cocaine and cannabis programme to tackle his addiction and work on his behaviours. The residential treatment will be for 6 months providing the individual attends on a regular basis.
- *D* has remained distant from TRY but is being prioritised as a central member of the group. He has an interest in driving and TRY has persuaded him to desist from illegal driving. TRY is working with him to get a driving licence. Another group member has been persuaded to get rid of his motorbike following interventions from TRY.
- *E* has developed a strong relationship with TRY. He is a leader to some of the younger people that orbit the group so he is a priority for TRY. He has been assisted

in getting a medical card with a view to getting into drug treatment. This young man told TRY of a job opportunity that he could not secure without a Safe Pass qualification. A place was secured on a course and TRY accompanied this young man to attend. He successfully gained the Safe Pass and TRY will now support him in moving forward.

- *F* has been assisted to find employment by TRY and is no longer associating with the group.
- *G* has stabilised significantly in his drug misuse and behaviour since interacting with TRY. He appears to have severe literacy issues and TRY is working with him to address these.
- *H* is another influential member of the group. He in turn has been greatly influenced by TRY and is planning to attend Liberties College to begin a career in community and youth work. He has become instrumental in developing the TRY programme ideas and his potential leadership is showing in his interactions with other group members. A CE scheme has been put in place for another young man to maintain the local playground and he will be supported by H for youth work in September. He will have the opportunity to create some groups for the summer project under the supervision of TRY. TRY also introduced and accompanied this young man to a self-help group to tackle one of his addictions and is currently free from that addiction for over 4 months.

By its nature, outreach and bridging work takes time and at times is potentially risky. As a result, a lot of work is done in pairs. It is an intensive process of building connection. TRY staff also do a lot of work outside their paid hours maintaining contact with the young men and being available at the times of particular appointments.

The actual working hours of the programme need to be recognised. The two daily sessions currently available is inadequate for workers to develop street engagement, build relationship, respond to crises, one-to-one mentoring, arrange various links within the community and attend to the essential paper work recording their engagements with the young people. The intense outreach, bridging and mentoring work require more than is allocated at this time. The staff currently work Tuesdays and Thursdays leaving a significant time gap in availability, particularly between Thursday and Tuesday.

3.Evaluation of TRY as an approach in theory and practice

3.1 Views of the young men

The young men who are engaged with the project speak with conviction about the difference it has made for them. Examples of progress have been cited above. In addition, the young men talk about the motivation and the sense of belief that the TRY staff instil in them. They describe the staff as the biggest contribution that the project has to offer. They described an approach that combines getting to know them as people, finding out what they could be good

at and discovering what was getting in the way of them being able to do something more in their lives. One participant described it as

'they really make you want to do better for yourself' and another *'if you put in 10% you're guaranteed to get 90% back, they just won't give up on you'* and *'its like as if its not a job for the two lads, they really do care about us'*

Finding the right service, course or employment opportunity was also highlighted as something the TRY project offered and is persistent in finding the right one to suit the person. The young men are encouraged and supported to try a short and achievable course, such as a Safe Pass, so that they can get work and/or go on to a longer course. Completing a course is a significant achievement for many of the group with whom TRY works as regular attendance and staying in one space is challenging. Previous experience of education is remembered negatively. Integral to bridging the young men into education and work is identifying other challenges in their lives such as addiction and managing anger. The staff work with the young men on these issues also, supporting them to acknowledge that they may need to seek help, referring them on to appropriate services and providing support to them while availing of services. In the words of one young man *'you think you can manage all this stuff yourself, but you can't, so you have to take the help'*

The social activities that are designed to offer the young men alternative recreational activities and to take them out of the flats complex and have less opportunity to engage in anti-social behaviour are also appreciated. It was described as *'its really great getting out of here – we'd never get a chance to do that sort of stuff'*

Some also spoke about personal and home relationships having changed and improved as a result of being engaged with TRY. One young man said *'I am getting on much better with my Ex, and taking the children more'* and another *'I am doing much more with my girlfriend now and not hanging around as much'*

One question asked of interviewees was to remember a moment or incident that stands out for them as highlighting the work of TRY and one of young men recalled one morning when he dropped into the centre and was asked by one of the others for the use of his phone – *'this guy is really hard and never cries or shows emotion but he was really down and nearly crying - he wanted to ring Karl or Gary. I gave him the phone and he did talk to one of them and that's all he needed to get started on something he had to do'*

One young man highlighted his appreciation of practical help *'they came and collected me at 7 o'clock in the mornig to get me to my course, and that made all the difference – I was doing it for them too'*.

When asked is there anything that TRY should be doing differently the young men couldn't think of anything and in most instances came back to the particular contribution of the staff. In some instances, they did say that the project should be doing something for the *'younger lads so that they can get into work or courses'*. Many of them are aware of the opportunities that exist in the labour market now, some on their doorstep in construction on the St. Teresa's Garden's site or the New Children's Hospital and think it is important to get into work now when there are possibilities. They see it as an opportunity to go further and one recounted an experience of a recent interview with a company where he prepared well and something he would never have considered within his reach before.

3.2 Views of local organisations

Agencies who work alongside and/or in collaboration with TRY see it as a very appropriate response to the target group with whom it works and can identify some outcomes. Prior to the commencement of TRY there was no agency working with this target group. They caused nuisance to some of the agencies in that they wanted to hang out at their base but did not want to or were not eligible to avail of services. Some agencies facilitated them through use of a room, but it became unsustainable due to their behaviour, others were prohibited from working with them as they weren't from the local area or part of their particular brief. One worker described the young men as having no *'mainstream youth work experience at all – they didn't know how to operate in a group setting'* which is unusual in a community like St. Teresa's Gardens. They are all of the opinion that TRY is needed and is making significant progress with the young men and particularly in the context of the limited resources with which it operates. Progress identified refers to establishing relationships with the young men through outreach, the young men being more respectful of community project staff and premises, bridging them into training courses, employment and therapeutic services, collaborating with other services to create the bridge, always keeping the young man at the centre of the work and maintaining commitment to the TRY model. *'Dogged determination', 'compassion', 'being there for the young men' 'visibility and availability' and 'pro-activity'* were all words used to describe the approach employed by the TRY staff.

The following are two examples of the work that stood out for those interviewed. One has to do with connection; *'the Tuesday breakfast – that is a very connecting for these lads, to come somewhere where they can cook and chat as they don't have much of this in their lives'*. The other has to do with discovery of ability; one young man who is considered to be very challenging *'successfully completed his Safe Pass course, the tutor found him to be very distracted but stuck with him and discovered that he was learning and taking in all he needed to know and was well able to process the information'*.

3.3 Community view of the TRY project

For the purposes of this evaluation it was decided to interview the four community representatives of the STG Regeneration Board. Three were available in the timescale available. The main concern amongst residents interviewed is for the younger age group, 14 to 18 year olds who are at risk of or beginning to get involved in drug use, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour. They believe that while the TRY approach is worthwhile and appropriate to the area it is *'working with the wrong age group'* or should at least be working with both age groups. There is also concern for work being done with those in the target group who are not from the area as they believe it encourages them to be there, perpetuating harassment and other anti-social behaviour. One resident expressed their concern as *'some of these are barred from the flats and now they can come and get help while our kids can't'*. In their experience anti-social behaviour remains a significant problem in the flats and there is no noticeable difference as a result of TRY. They have met with the staff at their invitation and did find this helpful in terms of understanding the approach better and letting them know their concerns. Further meetings would be welcomed.

3.4 Views of other members of the Regeneration Board

The Chair, Dublin City Council, Gardai, the Regeneration Worker and a newly appointed member bringing research experience from a third level institution were interviewed from the Regeneration Board. These interviewees brought a wider perspective to the work of and need for the TRY approach. There is agreement that estate management and policing will only go part of the way in reducing intolerable levels of anti-social behaviour and any changes brought by other interventions are to be welcomed. Instances were described where DCC and/or the Gardai had responded strongly to anti-social behaviour, to be met with heightened levels of anti-social behaviour in return, including violence towards the Gardai.

Most have experience of working across the Dublin 8 area and have identified the need for interventions with young men in this age group who are polydrug using and dealing, have mental health issues and are outside education and the labour market. Attention was also drawn to young women associated with the illicit drugs trade who require an intervention. Three flats complexes, Basin Lane, Oliver Bond and St. Teresa's Gardens were highlighted as all being in this situation. Each were described as having their own characteristics in relation to the effects of drug use and drug dealing. There is a sense that St. Teresa's Gardens is calmer at times and this is being attributed to the TRY project.

Attention was drawn by all to the lack of more mainstream youth services in this part of the city also. This has developed over time from where there had been a wide range of voluntary youth clubs run by volunteers and a youth service in Donore Avenue operated by City of Dublin Youth Services Board (CDYSB) to where there are now none. All activities now have a justice focus, such as garda Diversion and Probation. This is a theme for further development. Congregation of young men in flats complexes within which they no longer live was also highlighted as a pattern across the area. They still feel a connection to these areas through association, extended families or where they feel safest. Many don't settle in new areas and will keep returning unless they find a viable and rewarding alternative. *'This is where my friends are'* or *'I bring my brother and sister to school for my Ma every morning'* were reasons given as to why they spend time in St. Teresa's Gardens.

The overall sense from these members of the Regeneration Board is that TRY is only at the beginning of its development. While it did commence with a five month pilot in 2017 it was very limited and the break in funding wasn't helpful to its consolidation. It is believed that it has done a lot in twelve months, achieving both soft and hard outcomes, which are sufficient to say that it should be expanded and supported for a reasonable length of time.

3.5 Evaluation Themes

A range of themes were further explored in this evaluation; they were

- View of TRY as an approach in theory and practice
- Youth work provision in the Donore Avenue area
- Expansion of the TRY project
- Organisational development needs of TRY

Evaluation of TRY as an approach in theory and practice

Very strong support exists amongst those interviewed for the TRY project and its approach to working with the designated target group. Equally the young men are very clear in their

expression of the difference it has made to their lives. The approach is still being developed as it recognised that it will look different in each area as it emerges and grows. While some aspects need to be further developed there is a strong sense from those interviewed that it has a contribution to make in making change for these young people where other approaches haven't work.

Youth work provision in the Donore Avenue area

The lack of youth service provision in the South West Inner city and particularly in the vicinity of St. Teresa's Gardens, Basin Lane and Oliver Bond flats has serious implications for children and young people. There are no services and few facilities to support and encourage them into pro social activities if they are at risk of engaging in activities that lead them into trouble. The only other service operating in St. Teresa's Gardens is a homework club and it too is at risk of closure by the end of 2019. This situation presents further challenges for the TRY approach as there is no youth project into which to bridge younger members of TRY or to engage with the younger age group for a time until they are ready to access a mainstream service. Ideally there would be a continuum of services and activities to meet the needs of young people and some would not get to the point to which TRY is currently responding. Most of those interviewed for this evaluation highlighted the need for the development of youth services. Some also highlighted the importance of being able to work with the 13-15 year olds as this age is seen to be crucial in terms of when they are most likely to be susceptible to anti-social influences. This would also build greater support for the TRY approach from residents. This is as it in Ballymun where BRYR provides a continuum of services. One of the aspects that supported its success was a multi-faceted youth service into which young people could be bridged.

Further exploration of this area also suggests further collaboration between TRY, Donore Foroige Service and Solas as all are concerned with a target group that are broadly similar in profile. It is evident that there are good relations and cross project support but there could also be opportunities for more integrated working that this evaluation can only recommend rather than prescribe. There is a welcome for the scoping work currently underway by CDYSB as it is hoped that this will draw further attention, with a solid research base from which to plan for youth service provision.

Expansion of the TRY project

A case has been made to retain and expand the TRY project and is available. In summary it is based on the following reasons

- TRY has demonstrated through its pilot and through the current work that it can make a material difference to the lives of the target group and the community they harm if it is supported and sustained.
- Within walking distance of Donore Avenue, other communities are suffering similar community safety threats through the activities of similar groups of young people. Neighbourhoods in the Thomas Street and James' street areas are currently experiencing similar issues, with groups of boys and men aged between fourteen and mid-twenties involved in anti-social behaviour connected to the drug-trade.

- Around these groups are usually satellites groups of children acting as runners or messengers, or teenage girls associating with the main group and they require engagement before they are drawn in to main stream criminal drug activity

This overall situation strongly suggests the need for the expansion of TRY. This evaluation further supports that view based on the experience of those availing of the project and those that know and support it in the community. At present this is envisaged as a team of three workers, including at least one female, working full time in the area to outreach and bridge these young people and young adults into local youth services, drug and alcohol services, recreational services, education, training and employment.

Everyone interviewed supports the expansion of TRY with most supporting a phased expansion. While the need to expand the project beyond St. Teresa's Gardens is evident there is a belief that there is a need to initiate work with the younger age group first and also learn from this. One caution against this is that if a project becomes embedded in a community it can be difficult to move beyond it as community ownership becomes established.

Further external research also supports implementation of the TRY approach. A study on *The Drug Economy and Youth Interventions*, commissioned by Citywide¹ looked at the TRY project as part of the research and proposes it to be a 'worthwhile approach in the medium term in that it shows promise for adding value to the range of services already available at community level'; albeit that there have been no outcome studies of the model, and therefore no verifiable evidence base. "Building Community Resilience" a research project by Dr. Johnny Connolly of the University of Limerick was commissioned by the Policing Forum Network, a network of the four Local Policing Forums in the Dublin South Central Area to look at how the community can respond to drug related antisocial behaviour will also recommend the TRY model should be part of the community response. This study is due to be published later in 2019.

Organisational development needs of TRY

A recommendation to expand a project brings with it a requirement for funding, management and good governance. Currently TRY has a steering group that has supported its start-up, continuance, employment and support of staff and all matters related to management. If it is to be expanded as recommended a properly constituted Board of Management is required. All of the Steering Group are well aware of this.

The most appropriate funding agency was discussed with many of those interviewed. The support of DCC was acknowledged and is seen in the context of regeneration. It was a very valuable source of funding at a time when there was a need for a pilot. In order to expand, build ownership and collaboration a broader range of funding will be required. DCC are willing to continue a part funding arrangement if others are also prepared to commit. As the project has a wide remit in terms of the issues it is addressing it is appropriate that this is reflected in funding sources also. The range of possibilities include CDYSB, the Department of Health – Drug Programme Unit, the Department of Justice, the Department of Education/Education and Training Board and Dublin City Council. In addition, there could be additional funding from philanthropic sources. The time allowed by the extension of funding over the next period can support this to be done.

Additional staff brings additional responsibility and the proposal for three staff will require supervision responsibilities. The Community Drug Team Co-ordinator is currently providing this. The nature of the TRY project work may require particular supervisory skill. Of the three proposed staff one could carry extra supervisory responsibility.

4. Evaluation Recommendations

This evaluation makes the following recommendations based on the above findings

- That the TRY project is continued and expanded as proposed in the Steering Group's Proposal with particular attention paid to starting to engage with the 14 to 16/17 year olds in St. Teresa's Gardens before work begins in other areas, or simultaneously if that is more appropriate. This work should concentrate on those most at risk or already involved in drug dealing activity and anti-social behaviour. There is a danger that in the absence of other youth services there would be an expectation that TRY would expand its brief to meet a broader range of needs.
- That if funding is secured the Steering Group begin to investigate the best management model for the project and broadening membership to include community representation and appropriate others
- Premises for TRY work also requires further consideration. It is unlikely to be sustainable to use the Donore Community Centre as a base for work that takes place in three communities, particularly given the target group. To date the Centre has worked reasonably well even though it was thought that it wouldn't. Based on the need to be able to outreach from close quarters and have a base for meetings and food preparation it is likely that the project will need a base in each community. This needs to be an optimum distance from the flats complex itself as the likelihood of TRY being based in a flat was strongly opposed by residents in St. Teresa's Gardens.
- That TRY continues to engage with and build on relationships established with other agencies. This would include exploration of further possible collaboration with the Foroige – DAN Garda Diversion Project and Solas in particular.
- That TRY continues to engage with residents to improve understanding and awareness of the project

2. *The Drug Economy and Youth Interventions An Exploratory Research Project on Working with Young People Involved in the Illegal Drugs Trade*, a report by Dr Matt Bowden Technological University Dublin for Citywide

Appendix One: Evaluation Interviewees

TRY Staff members: Gary Lawlor and Karl Duchas

TRY participants: Five young men

Regeneration Board: Chair: - Stephen Rourke

Resident Representatives - Chris Taylor, Sarah, Martin

Dublin City Council – Tony Smithers

Gardai – Sgt. Mick Nagle and colleagues Garda Kieran McElliot and
Garda Dave

Matt Bowden – Technological University of Dublin

Regeneration Worker Lyndsey Anderson

Donore Avenue Community Drug Team Co-ordinator - Fearghal Connolly

Foroige DAN Garda Youth Diversion Project - David Doyle

Solas Project Eoin Lynagh

Eddie D’Arcy

Steering Group Donnacha Hurley

Donore Community Centre Staff member - Alan Buckley

Appendix 2

About the Intensive Outreach and Bridging Model

Targeted Response for Youth was inspired by tried and tested programme of intensive outreach and engagement with young people participating in groupings active in anti-social-behaviour and criminality in the Ballymun area. The programme (or more accurately set of programmes) is influenced by Lugna Gattan (Easy Street) a programme run by the Fryshuset organisation in Sweden.

Lugna Gattan

Lugna Gattan was initiated in 1995 response to problems with anti-social behaviour on the Stockholm public transport system by youths. Sanction-based responses by police and other authorities were having limited impact, so it was decided to try a novel approach. The insight was that the young people were influenced most by peer pressure and role modelling. This required intervention by people to whom the young people could easily relate and see as role models. To this end, the project recruits young adults, somewhat older than the target young people, who have been in the criminal justice system themselves. These are known as “hosts”. Their job is to meet the young people on the street where they gathered and build relationship with them. The intention of the relationship building is to establish enough trust to be able to direct the young people towards a more positive engagement in their community.

This positive engagement involves connecting the young people with services they need such as housing, education, counselling, youth services etc. and facilitating them to serve their communities by helping in community projects. Many of the target young people in their turn became hosts and outreach to other alienated young people.

The Ballymun initiatives

Ballymun Regional Youth Resource (BRYR) adopted this approach for their context in Ballymun. They piloted their own Easy Street programme, recruiting three outreach workers who, by virtue of their life experience, could easily relate to the targeted young people.

The project initially identified three distinct groups operating in the same area of Ballymun. One was a group of young men in their late teens who were selling drugs as part of a wider drug trade system in the area. A second was a group of younger male teens, who revolved around the first group and acted as runners. A third group of younger females on the outskirts of both these groups.

All young people in these groups were characterised as being at risk, having low self-esteem, poor records at school, engaging in risky behaviour with alcohol and other substances and through sexual activity and who were causing harm to their community through anti-social and criminal behaviour.

Street outreach consisted of the work team holding conversations with the groups, developing more programmed activities such as games and sports and progressing to educational activities on subjects such as risky sexual behaviour and drug misuse. All activities took place on the streets where young people met initially – some 102 sessions in all.

This work led, more quickly than expected, to the young people coming into the youth centre for more extended group sessions. 52 such sessions were recorded in all in the pilot phase.

Below is an extract from an evaluation of the BRYR Easy Street project:

“Direct feedback from young people in the focus groups

Young people reported:

- *Seeing the Hosts as ‘like family’, ‘role models’ and ‘heroes’*
- *Feeling more confident and having improved self esteem*
- *Feeling safer and less anxious during street and Reco sessions*
- *Some young men reported a change in attitude towards the Gardaí, seeing them as ‘just doing their job’ as opposed to being a threat*
- *That Easy Street had changed their lives and way of thinking*
- *That without Easy Street they would spend more time ‘hanging around the blocks’, drinking, using and dealing drugs and general anti-social behaviour*
- *Drug and alcohol use was reduced as all young people chose not to engage in these activities before sessions*
- *The overarching themes from the focus groups was that young people recognise they have choices in their lives and that their futures are within their control*

Feedback from Residents and Stakeholders

- *Stakeholders reported that school attendance had increased during the pilot period*
- *Stakeholders and residents reported a reduction in gang loitering and anti-social behaviour. However, blocks were knocked down during the pilot period and it was proposed that this may have contributed to these reductions. The residents in particular were adamant that although the environmental changes had impact, they felt significant reductions were more attributable to the work of Easy Street*
- *Significant evidence of programme effectiveness was the behaviour of young people during the annual Halloween festival, in previous years anti-social behaviour included setting cars on fire and destroying the park, however during the Easy Street pilot the festival had been markedly less destructive, with the park in better condition and free from bottles and broken glass the following day*
- *Residents reported feel safer and that younger children were now able to use the park, where previously this had not been possible due to intimidating and anti-social behaviour*

Feedback from the hosts

*The Hosts reported that the level of engagement had surpassed all expectations in terms of how quickly and strongly bonds were formed between young people and the Hosts, how open young people were about their experiences and the level of uptake of trips, group work, and wider BRYR activities. Young people’s willingness to move out of their ‘territory’ to come to the Reco was significant, as was going on trips outside of Ballymun – something that is very difficult for young people who had never left the area. The primary difference Hosts observed was **that the young people participating in Easy Street are recognising that they have choices in their lives and that their futures are within their control.** The hosts also noted that Easy Street had broadened the peer group and social networks of many of the target group, and that there was early evidence of lessening associations with gang culture.*

Conclusions

The external evaluator noted that the Easy Street Team had successfully built trust, engaged consistently and proactively with the gangs/groups either in their own space on the block, on the street and then facilitated the movement of this engagement to Easy Street specific programme based activities on site in the Reco. They concluded that Hosts were pivotal to Easy Street’s early successes, and that their personal backgrounds and identity in the community were key. The evaluator also noted

that strong interagency links were important, with other organisations being aware of or supporting Easy Street.”

Over time, young people initially contacted in groups on street corners by outreach workers have progressed to lead constructive fulfilling lives, and a number have become themselves community leaders - for example - organising activities for younger people in the community parks.

BRYR has developed a range of interventions which add to the work of the outreach programmes. These include Outfit, an intense one-to-one mentoring programme with individuals targeted through the outreach work. Outfit works with around 20 individuals in any one programme who are mentored to develop positive momentum in their lives, addressing their challenges in education deficit, finding employment, and getting help their drug or alcohol habits or other personal issues.

It is important to state that, while the Ballymun work was influenced by the Swedish project, BRYR developed its own distinctive version of the approach. Similarly, TRY has adapted its approach to the circumstances in the Donore area. No two such projects will be identical.



Appendix 3

Proposal to sustain and Expand Target Response to Youth Programme currently operating in St Teresa's Gardens. (Excerpts from)

This paper is a proposal to consolidate the Targeted Response to Youth (TRY) programme in the St Teresa's Gardens/Donore area of Dublin 8 beyond summer 2018. The proposal includes a rationale to expand the programme to other areas in the South West Inner City in 2019 for an initial two-year programme.

The need to sustain TRY.

The nature of the outreach and bridging work is that it takes time. It is an intensive process of building connection. Both pairs of workers in the Pilot and the current stage of TRY do a lot of work outside their paid hours maintaining contact with the young men.

The sudden ending of the Pilot project and the hiatus of ten months had a serious negative impact on the work and on the young people. By the end of the five-month pilot period, there was a high-level of engagement with all eight of the target group. However, the ending of the project appears to have had consequences. One young man, who had been brought by the project to the point of appearing for job interviews just as the project ended, fell back quickly into mental health crisis following the withdrawal of support and was sectioned under the mental health act. The group generally lessened their engagement with the Drug and Alcohol Service where they had been meeting off-street with the outreach workers. A number of others also withdrew from any pro-social activities that had been nurtured through the project.

In that intervening year, anti-social behaviour around the complex grew and became all but intolerable for residents. This is largely due to the unprecedented reduction in policing in the area, but the withdrawal of street outreach may well have been a factor. The number of young men now a target for TRY has grown from 8 in the Pilot to 18 now.

All this points to the need to maintain the programme beyond its current funding term, which will end this summer. It will be irresponsible to allow a repeat abrupt ending of support for this group and the community.

The real working hours of the programme also need to be recognised. The two-sessions currently available is clearly inadequate for workers to develop street engagement, one-to-one mentoring, arranging various links to the community and attend to the essential paper work recording their engagements with the young people. The intense outreach, bridging and mentoring work require a *minimum* of 16 hours with two workers and a programme budget of *at least* 5,000 per annum to maintain work with the current group.

The case to expand TRY.

TRY works. It has demonstrated through its pilot and through the current work that it can make a material difference to the lives of the target group and the community they harm if it is supported and sustained. Within walking distance of Donore Avenue, other communities are suffering similar community safety threats through the activities of similar groups of young people. Neighbourhoods in the Thomas Street and James' street areas are currently experiencing similar issues, with groups of boys and men aged between fourteen and mid-twenties involved in anti-social behaviour connected to the drug-trade.

Around these groups are usually satellites groups of children acting as runners or messengers, or teenage girls associating with the main group.

All of these could benefit from an outreach team of three workers, including at least one female, working full time in the area to outreach and bridge these young people and young adults into local youth services, drug and alcohol services, recreational services, education, training and employment.

Why TRY is unique.

The Outreach and Bridging model addresses a gap in current services because

1. It emphasises on-street relationship building and so reaches a target group which centre-based activities won't reach
2. Its work is not restricted by age. Many of the target group range in age from young teens to adults in their late twenties. TRY outreaches to all members of a group who are connected to anti-social behaviour in a community.
3. Its work is not restricted by address. Many of the target group do not live in the area where they do harm, though they may have connections there. TRY follows the group wherever they locate, and does not differentiate according to their personal address.
4. Its work is not restricted by "presenting issue". TRY works with any challenges for those involved in anti-social groupings. It is not focused on their drug issue or their homelessness issue or any one presenting issue. It seeks to bridge with each person to the set of services or supports they need.

Intensive Outreach and Bridging - The Model Behind the Work

The Vision

This model constructs the problem of drug-trade groupings as two sides of a bridge. On one side is the chaotic world of belonging to a group engaged in polydrug misuse and criminalisation, causing harm to communities as well as taking risks with personal safety, mental health and well-being. People stay there because it affords them a counterpoint to low self-esteem by having status as a "player" or "hard man" in a community marked by powerlessness and alienation. It is a place of addictive excitement, power, and the possibility of financial gain¹.

On the other side of the bridge is a life where self-fulfilment is possible through healthy personal relationships, positive regard, self-care and sufficient opportunity in education and work.

It is possible to cross from one side to the other – and back again. But it is frightening. It is unlikely that people will be persuaded to cross from the chaotic side by people beckoning them from the regular-life side. To succeed in having them cross, it is necessary to cross over and to spend time with them on the other side of the bridge. People will cross only if they develop a strong trust in the person who wants them too. This requires the encourager, someone who will listen, ask searching questions and offer real alternatives. The young person will only develop that trust if they can easily relate to their encourager – if they see something of themselves in them. Crossing, when it begins, takes a lot of hand-holding. There is likely to be a lot of false starts and faltering.

Once a person crosses, it is important that they are welcomed and supported to fit in to the regular-life side. They will effectively be a refugee in a strange place. It has to feel comfortable enough for them to stay a while, so they find that they have a place there. Their encourager will need to stay with them a while, as they introduce them to new friends and supporters.

The Practice

In practical terms the outreach workers make contact with the group and hang out in their space. They look for opportunities to offer attractive engagement – perhaps by arranging street based sports activities where the group congregate. They always work in pairs, for reasons of safety. Over time, or perhaps very quickly, it may be possible to attract the group or some of them to participate in off-street activity such as organised adventure sports or a trip to a gym.

As the relationship develops, the workers begin to individualise the group members in their planning – identifying individual needs and energies. They begin to take the opportunity for more one-to-one work. As the relationship allows, they take opportunities to have deeper conversations with the young people. Perhaps they want to make a go of a personal relationship. Perhaps they are growing tired of living with the effects of being drugged. The workers can begin to offer alternatives, describing how they themselves, or people they know, achieved those goals, or offering to introduce the person to someone who might help.

Part of the work will be dealing with the young people as a group, as well as individually. This is important as the group identity as a “gang member” can be very important for members. Work with the group can develop into group-work, where the young men reflect together on their lives and what they want for themselves. Perhaps they might develop constructive outlets as a group, contributing to a community event or participating together in a community arts project.

The work is characterised by care, but just as much by challenge. The workers will “put it up to” the young people that they are responsible for themselves and that they have choices. They may confront them with the consequences of the choices they are making for themselves and those whom they are harming. This is not about “molly-coddling”. It is not about rewarding poor behaviour. It is about challenging people to reflect on what they want for themselves and being ready to support them when they want to make different choices.

Reflecting together as a team, the outreach workers can devise realistic “care plans” for individual young people. They keep records of their interventions. All the while, they mark the professional boundaries they must keep as outreach workers. They watch any impulses they might have to disempower the young person by doing everything for them, or by disclosing inappropriate personal information in an effort to build a “friendship”. They help each other maintain these boundaries, but they will need occasional conversations with a supervisor too.

In time, some of the young men may be ready to engage in services or supports that can help them realise their personal goals. The outreach workers will need to have good relationships with these support services, so that they can fulfil their promises to the young people. They will need to mediate between the service and the young man, as neither might be familiar with what the engagement might throw up. Perhaps the young man won’t show up for an appointment. Perhaps the service will place unnecessary bureaucracy in the way.

The grafting of the young person onto a new support system might take very quickly, or may take a long time, or may fail. The outreach team will stay in touch, pulling back gradually as the new supports take hold.

In some cases, a young man that finds new supports can become a strong peer influence on his former group members or on others in the orbit of that group. These may be younger family members or neighbours. It may be possible for him to play a complementary role in the ongoing work of the outreach team.

In summary, there are two movements in the model underpinning this work – **Outreach** and **Bridging**.

Outreach

People who can easily identify and relate to people in the target group make contact with them where they gather. They build relationships of trust and act as role models through intensive outreach, and informal street-based activities. These workers are professionals who can keep good records of their work, maintain boundaries as professionals, and develop realistic and flexible programme plans for those with whom they work.

Bridging

The workers also have the competence to mediate between the young people and those services they need whether they be education, employment, personal development, drug and alcohol, medical or social services. Over time, the workers hand-hold the young people as they cross the bridge from criminal life to a more constructive life-path involving education, work, healthy positive relationships, a positive relationship with drugs and alcohol and a positive regard for and by their community.

Key structural components of the IOB model

Competent Staff

The model is utterly dependent for its success on its staff. They must have the capacity to relate to the target group and build bridges between them and the resources to achieve a more constructive life. However, the staff are surrounded by key support systems.

Governance

The organisational structure within which such a project can be held administratively. The organisation holding the work must understand and be committed to the ethos of the Intensive Outreach and Bridging model. It needs to ensure good management of funding and administration, freeing the staff to spend as much time as possible in frontline work.

A Steering group

The project will require a carefully selected steering group including expertise on the IOB model, knowledge of the community and of the essential services required to support the target young people to make the life changes required.

Supervision

The work requires staff to have good supervision to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained in their interactions with young people.

Sustainable funding

The nature of the work is that it is about building trust over long periods of time. It is often unpredictable in its outcomes given the usually chaotic nature of the target group. Therefore, it requires stability of resources so that the process of relationship building is not interrupted by loss of staffing or programme budgets.

Appendix 2.

Evaluation of the Pilot TRY March to August 2017 (Extract)

The TRY pilot project was established in March 2017 for a five-month trial period by the St Teresa's Gardens (STG) Regeneration Board. The initiative was in response to intensive drug-dealing activity by a group of young men, some of whom live in the complex and all of whom have some personal connection to it. This group is connected to Crumlin based drug dealers. They use STG as a location for selling, partly because of their connection to the estate. Also, the estate also has a long history of hosting drug-dealing and is an ideal location for the trade given the many secluded public locations

for dealing such as halls, stairwells, balconies and unsupervised open areas. This situation is exacerbated because it was on one of the failed regeneration sites. A planned regeneration programme was halted in 2010 leaving many blocks half emptied. The resulting semi-dereliction made it a choice location for drug dealing.

The drug-trade activity brings with it many visitors to the estate to buy and use drugs who are often very chaotic. It also attracts young people who are drawn by the glamour of the “gang culture” to “hang-out” in the area drinking and playing loud music and engaging in petty vandalism. Anti-social behaviour around the presence of the trade in the estate results in littering with drug detritus, public disorder, urinating and defecating in hallways, vandalism of property such as cars, doors, windows, washing lines and satellite cable dishes. There is also a sense of menace and intimidation on the estate and the danger of children from the wider area being drawn into the activity. In recent months, there have been some serious assaults connected to the drug-trade at St Teresa’s at the complex and elsewhere.

Initiatives to curb this behaviour from both Dublin City Council and the Gardaí through estate management initiatives, monitoring by CCTV and patrolling have had an impact. But the activity is quelled at best for a couple of months before flaring up again.

The Regeneration Board met with a former manager of Ballymun Regional Youth Resource, who has extensive experience of initiating and managing outreach based youth work programmes which target groups involved in street drug dealing. The model of selecting outreach workers who can relate to those involved in the groups to build a trusting relationship with them, with a view to bridging them back to more constructive life choices, was attractive to the Board. In early 2017, Dublin City Council agreed to fund a pilot project.

The outreach workers engaged the target group in three settings-

- In the Drug and Alcohol Team building where there is a lounge, a pool room as well as spaces for one-to-one conversation.
- On the street, particularly around the derelict back blocks on the estate and on the football pitch at the back of the estate.
- On outings to activities, particularly St Catherine’s Sports Centre for use of the hall for sports and the gym, or to go-karting venues or other activity pursuits.

The team use the Monday sessions for unstructured contact on the street or in the Drug Team. One of the two is an accomplished pool player and footballer and uses these skills to develop interaction. Fridays are used for structured activities such as outings to the gym or the go-karting track.

In between the 6 contact hours, staff are involved in intensive phone based interaction with the group. (This time is outside their sessional hours and is essentially voluntary). They contact the group to remind them of activities, to check in on personal issues or to follow-up on practical assistance such as arranging courses, counselling or appointments with statutory services.

Indicative Annual Budget of South Inner-City TRY Programme. The programme is proposed initially for two years

Salaries¹ –

- Two Outreach Staff **70,000**

• One Team Leader	<u>38,000</u>	108,000
Programme costs		
• Centre based activities	10,000	
• Upskilling and other support programmes	8,000	
• Transport	<u>2,000</u>	20,000
Venue Hire		3,000
Staff support – training and supervision		1,000
Longitudinal Evaluation		3,000
Administration		13,300
Total		148,300

Note - In the second year it is proposed to add a developmental budget that will train some of the young people targeted to begin outreach workers themselves. This closed loop, where some of those benefitting from the programme in turn become leaders working alongside the outreach/bridging team is a feature of the Outreach and Bridging model. Additional budget for this work in the second year is put at €8,000