

# INTERVENTION ROADMAPS: FOR AT-RISK YOUTH INTEGRATION IN IRELAND



2025

# Foreword & Acknowledgment

This publication was developed as one of the core outputs of the **BEYOND – Building Bridges: Empowering Youth, Nurturing Determination** project, co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ program.

BEYOND is an 18-month initiative running from April 2024 to October 2025. The project aims to provide holistic and age-appropriate support to vulnerable people aged 14 to 30 living in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Ireland. Through targeted interventions, it seeks to strengthen young people's inner resilience and empower them to navigate their challenges.

The project is a partnership between **G.F.C. Generation for Change CY** (Coordinator, Cyprus), **Blackwater Training & Consulting** (Ireland), and **Foundation "Situational Center Open Doors"** (Bulgaria). The research team from all three organizations extends its deepest gratitude to the young people in Cyprus, Bulgaria, and Ireland who generously participated in the interviews and surveys. Their courage and openness in sharing their lived experiences and challenges lie at the heart of this report.

This publication was co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

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# INTRODUCTION

The roadmap builds directly on the findings of the BEYOND mini report, which explored the lived realities of at-risk youth across the three partner countries. In Ireland, research was carried out by Blackwater Training & Consulting and included a desk review of national literature and policy documents, as well as field research conducted between April and July 2024. This fieldwork comprised two semi-structured interviews, a focus group with 9 participants, and 32 survey responses, capturing insights from young locals and refugees.

For local youth, the findings revealed systemic challenges in accessing social activities, mental health services, housing, employment, and entrepreneurship training. While for Ukrainian refugees needs were different, participants described barriers linked to healthcare, life skills training, faith based services, employability skills training, as well as education. These insights helped shape the intervention priorities identified in this roadmap.

This roadmap was co-developed by Blackwater Training & Consulting in Ireland in collaboration with project partners Generation for Change CY and Foundation "Situational Center Open Doors" in Bulgaria. The roadmap design followed a participatory, co-creative process involving inter-partner reflection sessions, local consultations with youth and community actors, and workshops to contextualize and refine intervention ideas.

The three proposed interventions for Ireland are designed to address key challenges identified in the research. They focus on: improving access to inclusive, engaging, and locally delivered social activities; providing integrated supports that connect language learning with employability pathways, cultural expression, and personal development; and promoting mental health, physical well-being, and social cohesion through age-appropriate group activities and sports. These interventions are designed to be adaptable and sustainable, with potential for implementation by local Civil Society Organization, youth-led initiatives, community groups, and public sector entities working to improve the well-being and integration of at-risk youth in Ireland.

# Summary of Needs Analysis

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Blackwater Training is based in Virginia, Co. Cavan and work with rural communities in the region.

Working under the remit of the BEYOND project, during the summer months of 2024, Blackwater Training worked alongside young people aged 14 – 30 years living in rural communities in Virginia, Co. Cavan, Killinkere, Co. Cavan, Maghera, Co. Cavan and Oldcastle, Co. Meath. Through desk and field research which was conducted to develop a deeper understanding of the unique needs faced by these individuals, a series of interventions were proposed by the young people to support their overall integration and inclusion into the region.

This document presents the interventions developed under the BEYOND project which have been developed for young people by young people, with many of whom living in or coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. These interventions have been developed with an inclusive mindset at the forefront, promoting the inclusion of all members of society, including individuals with disabilities, additional learning needs, and migrants.

There were two main cohorts within the research conducted by Blackwater Training, specifically (1) young people living in rural Ireland and (2) Ukrainian youth seeking international protection in Ireland. The first cohort of participants have lived in Ireland, attended school, and integrated into social activities in the community, while the second cohort had recently arrived with limited English language skills and are yet to integrate fully into the community.

Through the research conducted, we identified that as a result of their living status, geographical remoteness (15.2%) backgrounds and their socio-economic status (39.4%), many of these young people (both Irish and Ukrainian youth) experienced depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, and social isolation from the community. Social isolation was also experienced by the youth who participated in our research as they had limited opportunities to access towns and villages in their areas unless they had someone to drive them or they were willing to walk for long distances. Coupled with the fact that many of these young people were still in education or training (56%), it was financially impossible for them to purchase a car, which further exacerbated their feelings of anxiety, depression and social isolation.



# Summary of Needs Analysis

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**Prioritized Needs:** The top 3-5 priority needs for the target group, supported by evidence from the needs assessment and relevant to the BEYOND project focus are:

- **A need for social activities for young people in the community (supported by Interviews & Survey results):** The most pressing need that was identified by 24% of young people who participated in the survey was that there was an urgent need for access to adequate social activities in Virginia and its surrounding areas. Irish youth rated this need as 28% and Ukrainian youth who participated rated it at 12%. Presenting the findings to professionals working with young people in our region, one interviewee suggested a successful tool for integration and inclusion of young people in urban settings are Board Game Clubs. Through the provision of a safe space with board games that the young people could select, play and request, the idea behind this activity was that it would enable young people to meet up and socialise away from harm and danger.
- **Access to tailored language support for integration and employment (supported by survey results):** 29% of young Ukrainians who participated in the BEYOND research indicated an urgent need for language support or training that would support their personal development. These young migrants requested and suggested tailor-made English language classes that would not only support their personal development and integration but would also enable them to access a job in their community. While language training was not identified as a long-term need by Ukrainian youth, 54% of all youth who participated in this research identified the long-term need for access to adequate employment opportunities. The rationale for this shift in opinion was that in the short-term, Ukrainian youth could focus on their language skills so that in the medium to long-term (60%), they would be able to communicate in English to support them to find a job in their area. While Irish youth already possess English language skills, 55.56% of them also identified the need for job security and availability in the long-term.
- **Safe and inviting spaces for young people (supported by the survey results and the interviews):** According to Irish research, 23% of the population was under 18 in 2023 (Government of Ireland, 2023). During the research, young people identified a *“lack of social activities outside of sport”* and the difficulties of living in rural communities with limited public transport opportunities, including the need to *“walk 10kms to the local bus”*. Recognising the barriers that young people living in rural communities face, young people in the region proposed initiatives that would support their integration. During an interview with the Chairperson of the Local Development Association, drug taking and alcohol consumption were expressed as key challenges that are posed in our community. They spoke about *“the prevalence of drugs in every town and village in the county which makes peer pressure an ever growing challenge within our community”*.

## Summary of Needs Analysis

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The development of open spaces that are warm and safe that would allow the young people to congregate outside of the peer-pressure of drugs or alcohol were proposed as a solution to support youth to spend time together without the influence of drugs, alcohol or negative activities. One proposed solution which would focus on the spiritual development of young people in the region would be having “safe spaces that were visually different from the traditional space”, such as investing in bean bags, that would allow the young people to be in a space that didn’t remind them of the classroom setting.

- **Mental Health and Emotional Well-being support (supported by survey results):** While language and employment are critical, young migrants and Irish youth in the region reported ongoing emotional challenges, including loneliness, anxiety, low motivation, and isolation. 11.34% expressed an urgent need for access to adequate mental health services in the region. Marginally the same with 11.11% of Irish youth and 11.76% Ukrainian youth, this need for mental health and emotional well-being support transcends nationalities. These issues are compounded by past trauma (in the case of refugees) and by ongoing socio-economic insecurity. Yet mental health services are often not youth-friendly, culturally appropriate, or easy to access as discussed by some of the young people who engaged in the research. The research alluded to the development of a holistic, trauma-informed support system, including informal peer support networks and groups, workshops, and accessible pathways to counselling, as the most appropriate tool & intervention for supporting professionals, parents and community members to support at-risk youth living in the community. While recognising that these trauma-informed support systems are more a long-term intervention, ideally they would be developed and delivered by trusted community focused organisations and delivered in educational settings such as Family Resource Centres or offered by the Health Service Executive across Ireland.
- **Pathways to employment through skill-building and support (supported by survey results):** While 47% of the participants in the research were currently enrolled in secondary school education in Ireland, 56% of participants identified that employment was the most important and most pressing long-term need. This illustrates that there is a clear demand for employment readiness programmes that support youth in Ireland to access the labour market. For both the Irish youth and Ukrainian youth, the research shows that many individuals are highly motivated but lack the support to transition into stable employment. This includes help with CVs, interview prep, digital skills, and knowledge of workers’ rights. For young migrants, the research indicates that language classes in the short-term can support this training, but that all training should combine language classes, skills, and local job market access and information. In addition, the interventions could be tailored to the needs of the young people but could provide a wraparound support that includes personal development, confidence-building, and access to inclusive employers.

# Summary of Needs Analysis

- **Career Advancement and Skills Training (Supported by Survey Responses):** **Participants** indicated that a lack of employment and career opportunities was a major barrier. Around 17.7% identified employment as a key need, and 13.9% expressed a desire for employability and entrepreneurship skills training. This highlights the need for workshops that focus on building career skills, offering professional development, and preparing participants for the workforce, improving their chances of securing stable employment.
- **Physical Activity and Well-Being (Supported by Focus Groups):** Participants underscored the critical importance of physical activities, emphasizing that engaging in regular exercise is essential for significantly boosting their emotional and mental well-being. The planned intervention, "Sports for All," in Cyprus, directly addresses this need by providing a structured and inclusive environment for physical activity, an effective tool proven to reduce stress, elevate mood, and build a strong sense of community. The overwhelming demand for physical activity to promote holistic well-being aligns with focus group discussions, which highlighted the glaring absence of meaningful activities to alleviate stress. This intervention is a necessary step toward fostering resilience, emotional stability, and a sense of belonging.



# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### ***What is the intervention?***

This intervention aims to increase young people's access to inclusive, engaging, and locally delivered social activities, with a particular focus on rural communities where opportunities for connection may be limited. It is designed to address growing concerns around social isolation, low youth engagement, and reduced participation in community life – especially among migrant, minority, and marginalised young people.

The intervention provides structured and informal recreational opportunities in accessible community spaces such as libraries, GAA clubs, and multipurpose halls. Activities may include creative workshops, sports sessions, games nights, cultural events, or peer-led meetups – all of which are intended to foster connection, belonging, and improved mental health.

To ensure both safeguarding and age-appropriate engagement, activities are organized in separate groups based on age. This structure supports more meaningful peer interaction, tailored facilitation, and promotes a safe and comfortable environment aligned with the developmental, emotional, and social needs of each group.

By supporting positive youth development and peer interaction, this initiative contributes to broader goals around integration, inclusion, and community resilience. The intervention is also flexible in design, allowing local implementers and young people themselves to co-create activity schedules based on local interests, needs, and available resources.

### ***Target implementers of the intervention:***

The target implementers of this intervention include local government bodies, education & training providers, community groups, youth organisations, non-profit organisations, youth councils in Ireland, and the participants themselves (to become empowered and identify the interests of their peers). These groups have access to community spaces, such as training centres, community halls, and open spaces that could be used as welcoming spaces for young people to gather.



# Intervention 1

## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### *Components and activities:*

This intervention supports the social inclusion and mental wellbeing of rural youth by offering regular, structured activities that reflect their interests. Events are designed to promote confidence, reduce isolation, and build a stronger sense of community among Irish and migrant youth alike.

- Organise **monthly sports, arts, and cultural events** in local venues such as GAA clubs, libraries, and community centres.
- Partner with artists, community groups, and migrant organisations to deliver inclusive and **youth-led workshops**.
- Improve accessibility **for young people to attend these events** through **volunteer-based transport, such as car sharing, or repurposing bicycles** in collaboration with local Tidy Towns and Men's Sheds.
- Establish **youth councils with Family Resource Centres** to involve young people in planning and leading activities.



# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### **Tasks and Subtasks:**

#### **1. Identify and secure youth-friendly community spaces**

- a. Reach out to GAA clubs, local libraries, schools, and community centres to access suitable venues.
- b. Ensure spaces are accessible, safe, and welcoming, with necessary facilities such as seating, lighting, and Wi-Fi.

#### **2. Equip spaces for regular youth engagement**

- a. Furnish with beanbags, board games, sports equipment, art supplies, and basic digital tools to support diverse activities.
- b. Display multilingual signage where required and provide culturally inclusive materials to create a sense of belonging.

#### **3. Plan a recurring calendar of social and cultural events**

- a. Organise monthly events including sports, arts, workshops, and intercultural evenings. Young people suggested that specific events, such as board games evenings, could be organised on a less frequent basis depending on the interests of the group.
- b. Collaborate with local artists, community groups, and volunteers to co-host inclusive activities.

#### **4. Establish youth participation structures**

- a. Partner with community organisations such as the Family Resource Centres to form youth councils that contribute to event planning and delivery.
- b. Offer leadership roles to young people to build confidence and foster ownership.

#### **5. Promote access through rural mobility solutions**

- a. Develop a local lift-share system supported by community volunteers.
- b. Collaborate with Men's Sheds or Tidy Towns groups to repurpose bicycles and provide safety gear.

#### **6. Conduct outreach and engagement with the target group**

- a. Use schools, community networks, social media, and local services to promote events.
- b. Create inclusive invitations that reflect the diversity of young people in the area.

#### **7. Develop a digital platform to manage activities and collect feedback**

- a. Use free tools like Google Calendar and Google Forms to schedule events, handle sign-ups, and gather insights.
- b. Set up a simple web page or use existing platforms to keep participants informed.

#### **8. Provide refreshments and a welcoming atmosphere**

- a. Offer youth-friendly snacks and drinks at events to encourage participation.
- b. Ensure the space feels relaxed and informal to support relationship-building and return attendance.

# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### **Relevant Stakeholders:**

**1. Government Agencies and Local Authorities:** Local County Councils, Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT), Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), and Community and Enterprise Units.

**2. Educational Institutions:** Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Adult Learning Centres, post-primary schools, and further education colleges.

**3. Community and Migrant Support Organisations:** Family Resource Centres, Local Development Companies, migrant-led groups (e.g., Association of Ukrainians in Ireland), intercultural projects.

**4. Youth Organisations:** Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, Garda Youth Diversion Projects, youth councils.

**5. Professionals:** Youth workers, social workers, community development officers, English language teachers, job coaches, counsellors, and artists.

**6. Local Sports and Recreation Networks:** GAA clubs, community sports facilities, local youth sports organisations.

**7. Young People and Peer Facilitators:** Migrant and local youth engaged in co-design, peer mentoring, and leadership roles.

# Intervention 1

## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### Nature of Partnership Strategy that implementors can work towards:

#### 1. Government Agencies and Local Authorities

- a. Provide funding, infrastructure, and policy alignment in line with national youth integration and education strategies.
- b. Support outreach efforts through youth services, Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), and Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT).
- c. Offer access to public venues such as libraries, sports halls, and community rooms for programme delivery.

#### 2. Educational Institutions

- a. Promote the intervention to students and families through secondary schools, ETBs, and Adult Education Centres.
- b. Offer venues (e.g., classrooms, sports facilities) for use during evenings or weekends.
- c. Support learner progression through guidance counselling, literacy supports, or digital skill workshops.

#### 3. Community and Migrant Support Organisations

- a. Provide frontline support, peer outreach, and referrals through Family Resource Centres, migrant-led organisations, and intercultural centres.
- b. Facilitate recruitment of participants and volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- c. Offer psychosocial or integration-related services to complement core activities.

#### 4. Youth and Sports Organisations

- a. As interest in the groups increases, looking at hosting weekly activities or drop-in sessions within their venues.
- b. Share equipment (e.g., games, sports gear) or trained facilitators.
- c. Support young people's engagement through existing youth clubs or sports networks.

#### 5. Charities and Mental Health Organisations

- a. Deliver wellbeing-focused sessions on resilience, stress, and social connection, especially for vulnerable or isolated youth.
- b. Offer trained counsellors or facilitators to support youth during workshops or activities.
- c. Assist in identifying early signs of distress and refer young people to appropriate services.

#### 6. Local Businesses and Hospitality Sector

- a. Provide sponsorship (e.g., materials, refreshments, transport vouchers) or allow use of underutilised space (e.g., hotel meeting rooms, café backrooms).
- b. Participate in mentoring and mock interviews to support migrant youth's employability.
- c. Promote the programme within their customer networks and staff teams.



# Intervention 1

## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### Nature of Partnership Strategy that implementors can work towards:

#### 7. Trained Migrants and Peer Facilitators

- a. Act as community connectors by co-facilitating conversation circles, mentoring sessions, and cultural exchange events.
- b. Help bridge language and cultural gaps, particularly in employability and youth-led planning activities.
- c. Receive recognition or certificates for their contribution to the intervention.

#### 8. Young People and Community Leaders

- a. Young people will co-design events, lead promotional activities, and build peer interest in the hubs or social programmes.
- b. Community leaders can promote the programme through local networks and contribute cultural expertise, mentorship, or strategic input.
- c. Both groups can play key roles in sustaining engagement and ensuring the programme remains relevant to local needs.

### Capacity-Building Training for professionals Development in areas such as:

**1. Cultural Awareness and Diversity:** Facilitators and volunteers should receive training on cultural sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure respectful engagement with migrant and minority youth. This includes recognising unconscious bias, understanding cultural norms, and creating inclusive environments.

**2. Youth Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Practice:** Training should cover mental health awareness, youth-specific trauma, and how to respond appropriately to emotional or behavioural challenges. Workshops in trauma-informed care and mental health first aid are essential for ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

**3. Community Hub and Safe Space Management:** Volunteers managing community hubs should be trained on maintaining welcoming, accessible, and youth-centred environments. Training will also include procedures for venue upkeep, safeguarding, and managing multi-use spaces effectively.

**4. Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection (Safeguarding):** All facilitators working directly with young people must complete certified child protection training, including Tusla's Children First Programme, and understand their legal and ethical responsibilities in safeguarding minors and vulnerable adults.

**5. Conflict Resolution and Communication:** Facilitators will benefit from training in conflict management, de-escalation strategies, and positive communication techniques to ensure a peaceful and respectful atmosphere in community hubs and group activities.

**6. Activity Planning and Delivery:** Workshops will train facilitators in planning inclusive, engaging social and cultural events – including games nights, workshops, and youth-led initiatives – tailored to different age groups and interest levels.

**7. First Aid and Emergency Response:** General first aid and mental health first aid training should be provided to all professionals and volunteers. This includes CPR, response to minor injuries, and recognising signs of psychological distress.

# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### ***Capacity-Building Training for professionals Development in areas such as:***

**8.Volunteer Retention and Youth Engagement Strategies:** Training should include techniques to keep both volunteers and youth engaged over time. This includes participatory approaches, leadership opportunities, and feedback-based programme design.

**9.Monitoring and Evaluation:** Facilitators should be trained to track participation, gather feedback, and measure outcomes using simple monitoring tools. This helps ensure continuous improvement and alignment with participant needs and project goals.

### ***Baselines & Milestones:***

#### **Baseline Data:**

- Pre-interventions surveys to measure current levels of youth engagement and their mental health.
- Pre-intervention surveys to assess stakeholders knowledge of the gaps in youth engagement and mental health support available in the community.
- Some baseline questions that could be asked include:
  - a.In the past month, how many times have you participated in a community activity or event (e.g., sports, arts, or cultural events)? (a) None; (b) 1–2 times; (c) 3–5 times; (d) More than 5 times.
  - b.Do you feel there are enough social activities available for young people in your area? (a) Yes; (b) No; (c) Not sure.
  - c.How easy is it for you to travel to social or youth events in your community? (a) Very easy; (b) Somewhat easy; (c) Difficult; (d) I don't attend because of transport issues.
  - d.How often do you feel lonely or socially isolated? (a) Never; (b) Sometimes; (c) Often; (d) All the time.
  - e.Do you feel included or welcomed when you attend social activities in your community? (a) Always; (b) Sometimes; (c) Rarely; (d) I don't attend social activities.

#### **Pre-Intervention Assessments:**

Participants can complete pre-intervention surveys to assess their current status, including indicators such as stress, depression, anxiety, trauma, and social isolation. The assessments will also explore challenges faced in daily life, such as language barriers, employment, documentation issues, and adaptation difficulties, as well as levels of social connection, participation in community activities, and overall sense of belonging in the local society.

# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### ***Performance Indicators:***

#### **Pre- and Mid-Intervention mechanisms implementors can introduce to collect:**

- 1.Number of participants attending each session, recorded using sign-in sheets or digital attendance trackers.
- 2.Baseline information on participants' language ability, confidence, and sense of belonging, gathered through pre-intervention self-assessment surveys.
- 3.Feedback on initial expectations and motivations for participation, collected through intake forms or informal interviews.
- 4.Midpoint assessments of participants' progress in communication, confidence, or social engagement, using simplified reflection tools or surveys.
- 5.Self-reported mental wellbeing scores, collected at pre- and mid-intervention stages to track change in stress, isolation, and mood.
- 6.Number and type of workshops delivered, recorded using an activity log or digital event tracker.
- 7.Level of engagement, assessed through participation in activities, discussions, peer sessions, and mentoring.
- 8.Feedback from volunteers, peer facilitators, and staff, to evaluate programme delivery and identify emerging needs.
- 9.Observed improvements in employability skills or community integration, captured through mid-intervention reflections, focus groups, or one-to-one check-ins.

#### **Post-Intervention Indicators implementors can introduce:**

- 1.Post-intervention assessment of participants' confidence, communication skills, and mental wellbeing, using the same self-assessment tools from the pre- and mid-intervention phases to measure change.
- 2.Changes in participants' reported sense of inclusion, community connection, and readiness for work or further education, captured through post-programme surveys or informal interviews.
- 3.Qualitative feedback from participants on the usefulness of the intervention, challenges faced, and how they plan to apply what they've learned, gathered via surveys, focus groups, or reflection forms.

# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### Adaptation Process:

1. Feedback will be collected through surveys and informal conversations after each event.
2. Organisers will meet regularly to review insights and adjust event content and formats.
3. Suggestions will guide the introduction of new activities or changes in delivery style.
4. Adjustments will ensure ongoing relevance, accessibility, and youth engagement.

### Timelines:

#### Months 1 – 3:

1. Preparation & planning phase to engage community, conduct research and develop the training programme for workshops and the calendar of events for the social activities.

#### Months 4 – 5:

1. Launch recruitment and training phase for the volunteers.

#### Months 6 – 7:

1. Launch the first round of social activities for young people in one pilot location.

#### Months 8 – 12:

1. Full rollout of the social activities calendar in communities in rural Ireland.

#### Months 13 – 15:

1. Evaluate the success of the social activities programme, develop long term sustainability plans to secure future funding and continuously monitor the sessions throughout.



# Intervention 1

## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### **Advocacy Mechanisms:**

#### **Policy Advocacy:**

1. Use pre- and post-intervention data across all three programmes to highlight improvements in youth mental health, confidence, language skills, and social inclusion.
2. Develop concise policy briefs that align the interventions with Ireland's national goals for youth development, migrant integration, education, and rural inclusion.
3. Position the interventions as cost-effective, preventative measures that reduce future social spending by improving wellbeing, employability, and community engagement.
4. Collaborate with local stakeholders (e.g. ETBs, FRCs, LAIT teams, youth services, GAA clubs) to build local ownership, strengthen advocacy, and encourage policy alignment.
5. Promote public awareness through media campaigns, local radio interviews, and community newsletters – sharing real stories from participants and facilitators.
6. Host stakeholder briefings and open events at Community Hubs or training venues to showcase success, invite dialogue, and promote cross-sector collaboration.
7. Advocate for increased investment in youth-focused spaces, language learning supports, and inclusive employability programmes in rural and migrant communities.
8. Prepare a “Community Snapshot Report” combining statistical evidence, geographic service gaps, and participant testimonials to influence funders and policymakers.

#### **Awareness Campaigns and Promotion:**

1. Collaborate with local schools, Family Resource Centres, youth services, and migrant-led organisations to promote social activities, employability training, and Community Hubs.
2. Host community information events and open evenings at Community Hubs and training venues to explain the programmes and encourage sign-ups.
3. Run social media campaigns across Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups using posters, videos, and testimonials, supported by outreach from youth workers and community volunteers.
4. Share stories of impact such as youth gaining employment, building friendships, or improving their wellbeing to inspire others to participate.
5. **Target Audience:** Migrant and local youth aged 14–30, their families, peer networks, schools, and frontline service providers.
6. Emphasise the emotional, social, and educational benefits of participation, including reduced isolation, improved language skills, and access to safe community spaces.

# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### Milestones:

#### Months 1–2:

1. Finalise event formats, logistics, and outreach plan.
2. Conduct baseline assessments and begin youth engagement.

#### Months 3–4:

1. Recruit and train volunteers.
2. Secure community venues and partnerships.

#### Months 5–6:

1. Launch pilot activities and transport support.
2. Begin gathering initial participant feedback.

#### Months 7–12:

1. Deliver regular events and expand to new groups.
2. Collect feedback through surveys and informal check-ins.

#### Months 8, 10, 12:

1. Review progress and adjust activities based on feedback..

#### Month 12:

1. Host a closing event and present evaluation findings.
2. Prepare a final report and recommendations for sustainability.



### Feedback Mechanisms

#### Feedback Channels:

1. **Anonymous Surveys and Attendance Tracking:** Youth participants will be invited to complete short, anonymous surveys after events or workshops to rate their experiences, facilitators, and content. Attendance will also be tracked to identify engagement patterns, helping implementers understand which sessions are most effective and whether any barriers to participation exist.
2. **Focus Groups and 1:1 Conversations:** Midway and at the end of the intervention, group discussions will be held to gather open feedback on what participants find most valuable, and what could be improved. One-to-one conversations with youth and volunteers will be used to gather deeper insights, especially from those who may be less confident in group settings.
3. **Creative and Media-Based Feedback:** Young people will be encouraged to share their thoughts through short video testimonials, written reflections, or drawings. These materials can both inform programme development and support outreach by showcasing positive experiences.

# Intervention 1

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## Enhancing social activities for youth in Ireland

### ***Resource Requirements and Allocation:***

#### **Financial Resources:**

1. Venue hire (where not provided in-kind), facilitator fees, volunteer stipends, and materials such as games, stationery, refreshments, and workshop supplies.
2. Costs for promotional materials, social media advertising, and community outreach campaigns.
3. Transport supports for participants (e.g., bus passes, bike repair schemes) and light catering for community events or hub sessions.

#### **Human Resources:**

1. Professionals or trained peer educators to conduct workshops.
2. Coordinators, outreach workers, and volunteers to help with logistics, registration, and translation services.
3. Staff from local NGOs and universities to assist with outreach, coordination, and participant recruitment.
4. Interpreters or multilingual volunteers.
5. Young people who can be onboarded as the sessions continue to co-facilitate or co-host the events.

#### **Material Resources:**

1. Comfortable seating (e.g., beanbags, chairs), tables, and room dividers to create welcoming zones.
2. Recreational resources such as board games, gaming consoles, books, and music speakers.
3. Art and craft supplies (e.g., paints, markers, paper) for creative activities, youth-led projects, and promotional materials (relevant to all interventions).

#### **Resource Allocation:**

1. Prioritise delivery in rural or underserved areas with limited access to youth services, especially where migrant and vulnerable youth experience social isolation.
2. Allocate resources to support venues that are already used by or accessible to young people, including GAA clubs, libraries, Family Resource Centres, and community halls.
3. Direct funding towards the training of facilitators and volunteers to ensure inclusive, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive service delivery.

## End of Intervention 1

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### ***What is the intervention?***

In the 2024 BEYOND research, 56% of migrant youth identified long-term employment support as their most urgent need, while 29% highlighted language training as their most immediate priority. These findings reflect a clear need for integrated supports that bridge language learning with employability pathways.

The Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth is designed to address both needs simultaneously. The intervention provides tailored English language training alongside practical job readiness skills – such as CV writing, interview preparation, and workplace communication – to enhance participants' confidence, social integration, and career prospects in Ireland.

### ***Target implementers of the intervention:***

The intervention can be implemented by a range of actors working in migrant integration, education, and youth development. These include educational institutions such as Further Education and Training (FET) providers, English language schools, and Adult Education Services, who can lead the delivery of tailored language training and employability modules.

Community organisations and charities supporting migrants including Family Resource Centres, migrant-led associations, and intercultural projects, can offer local access points for participants and provide wraparound support such as mentoring, peer support, and signposting to services.

Government and public agencies, such as Education and Training Boards (ETBs), the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), and local development companies can support implementation through funding, infrastructure, and integration strategy alignment.

Peer facilitators from migrant communities can play a key role in outreach, language support, and cultural mediation, ensuring the programme is inclusive and responsive to participants' lived experiences. Career guidance professionals, employers, and job coaches can also be engaged to co-deliver practical sessions and strengthen progression pathways into work or further training.

Together, this diverse group of implementers can deliver a programme that is both practical and empowering, equipping migrant youth with the tools, confidence, and connections they need to build their future in Ireland.



## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### *Components and activities:*

- **Weekly English language classes** focused on everyday communication and work-related vocabulary, using real-life materials such as job adverts, CV templates, and application forms.
- **Employability workshops** covering topics like CV writing, interview preparation, workplace communication, and understanding payslips and basic contracts.
- **Monthly mentoring sessions** connecting migrant youth with local professionals for informal English practice, career guidance, and job market orientation.
- **Peer-led conversation circles** to practice English, build confidence, and share job-seeking tips in relaxed community settings such as libraries or cafés.
- **Training for peer support workers** from migrant communities to assist with language learning, job preparation, and outreach to newly arrived youth.
- **Intercultural awareness sessions** exploring workplace expectations, rights at work, and cultural norms to support integration and readiness.
- **Blended learning tools and online resources** to support flexible access for learners with varying schedules and digital skills.
- **Sessions delivered in accommodation centres** or in local community hubs to support participation rates.



## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### **Tasks and Subtasks:**

#### **1. Secure accessible community-based learning venues**

- a. Contact local ETBs, libraries, community centres, adult education providers, and accommodation centres to identify available learning spaces.
- b. Ensure the venues are youth-friendly, safe, and equipped with whiteboards, tables, chairs, and Wi-Fi.
- c. Equip spaces with culturally inclusive visuals, translation aids, and digital devices where possible.

#### **2. Recruit and train qualified language and employability facilitators**

- a. Launch an open call through social media, migrant support organisations, and educational job boards.
- b. Engage CELTA-qualified English language teachers, as well as job coaches, mentors, or volunteers experienced in youth work or integration.
- c. Reach out to CELTA course providers and local colleges to identify trainees or recent graduates seeking hands-on experience.

#### **3. Develop curriculum content aligned with migrant learners' needs**

- a. Prepare culturally sensitive and level-appropriate lessons on English for work, CV writing, interview skills, and workplace communication.
- b. Adapt materials to include visuals, simplified English, and real-world examples like job adverts and payslips.
- c. Include modules on intercultural understanding and navigating the Irish workplace.

#### **4. Design a mentoring and peer support programme**

- a. Recruit local professionals through business networks such as BNI or Network Ireland to act as mentors.
- b. Match mentors with migrant youth based on career interest or shared language.
- c. Develop peer-led conversation groups or informal meet-ups to practise English and share job-seeking experiences.

#### **5. Create a digital platform to manage logistics and participation**

- a. Use Google Forms for registration and feedback, and Google Calendar to share class schedules.
- b. Create a simple webpage or digital noticeboard for participants to access materials and event info.
- c. Track attendance and feedback through easy-to-use tools like Trello or Eventbrite.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### **Relevant Stakeholders:**

- 1.**Government Agencies and Local Authorities:** Local County Councils, Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT), Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), and Community and Enterprise Units
- 2.**Educational Institutions:** Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Adult Learning Centres, post-primary schools, and further education colleges
- 3.**Community and Migrant Support Organisations:** Family Resource Centres, Local Development Companies, migrant-led groups (e.g., Association of Ukrainians in Ireland), intercultural projects
- 4.**Youth Organisations:** Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, Garda Youth Diversion Projects, youth councils
- 5.**Professionals:** Youth workers, social workers, community development officers, English language teachers, job coaches, counsellors, and artists
- 6.**Local Businesses and Sector Representatives:** Employers, hospitality sector businesses, business networks (e.g., BNI, Network Ireland), workplace mentors.
- 7.**Young People and Peer Facilitators:** Migrant and local youth engaged in co-design, peer mentoring, and leadership roles.

### **Tasks and Subtasks:**

#### **1.Promote the programme and recruit participants**

- a.Partner with Family Resource Centres, migrant-led groups, and language schools to share posters and digital flyers.
- b.Promote through social media, WhatsApp groups, community events, and local job centres.
- c. Ensure all outreach is multilingual and accessible to non-native English speakers.

#### **2.Provide refreshments and support materials**

- a. Offer tea, coffee, and snacks to create a welcoming learning environment.
- b. Provide notebooks, pens, translated key word sheets, and vocabulary cards to aid learning.
- c. Ensure printed materials are simple, attractive, and practical.

#### **3.Gather feedback and adapt based on experience**

- a. Distribute short surveys or use informal feedback tools at the end of each session.
- b. Hold monthly facilitator debriefs to review challenges, successes, and participant needs.
- c. Adjust content, delivery methods, or scheduling in response to feedback and attendance trends.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### Nature of Partnership Strategy that implementors can work towards:

#### 1. Government Agencies and Local Authorities

- a. Provide funding, infrastructure, and policy alignment in line with national youth, integration, and education strategies.
- b. Support outreach efforts through youth services, Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), and Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT).
- c. Offer access to public venues such as libraries, sports halls, and community rooms for programme delivery.

#### 2. Educational Institutions

- a. Promote the intervention to students and families through secondary schools, ETBs, and Adult Education Centres.
- b. Offer venues (e.g., classrooms, sports facilities) for use during evenings or weekends.
- c. Support learner progression through guidance counselling, literacy supports, or digital skill workshops.

#### 3. Community and Migrant Support Organisations

- a. Provide frontline support, peer outreach, and referrals through Family Resource Centres, migrant-led organisations, and intercultural centres.
- b. Facilitate recruitment of participants and volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- c. Offer psychosocial or integration-related services to complement core activities.

#### 4. Youth and Sports Organisations

- a. Host weekly activities or drop-in sessions within their venues.
- b. Share equipment (e.g., games, sports gear) or trained facilitators.
- c. Support young people's engagement through existing youth clubs or sports networks.



### **Nature of Partnership Strategy that implementors can work towards:**

#### **5.Charities and Mental Health Organisations**

- a. Deliver wellbeing-focused sessions on resilience, stress, and social connection, especially for vulnerable or isolated youth.
- b. Offer trained counsellors or facilitators to support youth during workshops or activities.
- c. Assist in identifying early signs of distress and refer young people to appropriate services.

#### **6.Local Businesses and Hospitality Sector**

- a. Provide sponsorship (e.g., materials, refreshments, transport vouchers) or allow use of underutilised space (e.g., hotel meeting rooms, café backrooms).
- b. Participate in mentoring and mock interviews to support migrant youth's employability.
- c. Promote the programme within their customer networks and staff teams.

#### **7.Trained Migrants and Peer Facilitators**

- a. Act as community connectors by co-facilitating conversation circles, mentoring sessions, and cultural exchange events.
- b. Help bridge language and cultural gaps, particularly in employability and youth-led planning activities.
- c. Receive recognition or certificates for their contribution to the intervention.

#### **8.Young People and Community Leaders**

- a. Young people will co-design events, lead promotional activities, and build peer interest in the hubs or social programmes.
- b. Community leaders can promote the programme through local networks and contribute cultural expertise, mentorship, or strategic input.
- c. Both groups can play key roles in sustaining engagement and ensuring the programme remains relevant to local needs.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### **Capacity-Building Trainings for Facilitators Development in areas such as:**

**1.Cultural Awareness and Diversity:** Facilitators and volunteers should receive training on cultural sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure respectful engagement with migrant and minority youth. This includes recognising unconscious bias, understanding cultural norms, and creating inclusive environments.

**2.Youth Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Practice:** Training should cover mental health awareness, youth-specific trauma, and how to respond appropriately to emotional or behavioural challenges. Workshops in trauma-informed care and mental health first aid are essential for ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

**3.Community Hub and Safe Space Management:** Volunteers managing community hubs should be trained on maintaining welcoming, accessible, and youth-centred environments. Training will also include procedures for venue upkeep, safeguarding, and managing multi-use spaces effectively.

**4.Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection (Safeguarding):** All facilitators working directly with young people must complete certified child protection training, including Tusla's Children First Programme, and understand their legal and ethical responsibilities in safeguarding minors and vulnerable adults.

**5.Conflict Resolution and Communication:** Facilitators will benefit from training in conflict management, de-escalation strategies, and positive communication techniques to ensure a peaceful and respectful atmosphere in community hubs and group activities.

**6.Activity Planning and Delivery:** Workshops will train facilitators in planning inclusive, engaging social and cultural events – including games nights, workshops, and youth-led initiatives – tailored to different age groups and interest levels.

**7.First Aid and Emergency Response:** General first aid and mental health first aid training should be provided to all professionals and volunteers. This includes CPR, response to minor injuries, and recognising signs of psychological distress.

**8.Volunteer Retention and Youth Engagement Strategies:** Training should include techniques to keep both volunteers and youth engaged over time. This includes participatory approaches, leadership opportunities, and feedback-based programme design.

**9.Monitoring and Evaluation:** Facilitators should be trained to track participation, gather feedback, and measure outcomes using simple monitoring tools. This helps ensure continuous improvement and alignment with participant needs and project goals.



## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### **Baselines & Milestones:**

#### **Baseline Data:**

- Research the levels of migrant youth unemployment in rural communities
- Research the language skills of migrants who are seeking employment
- Analyse the barriers that are faced by migrant youth that prevent them from accessing the labour market.
- Conduct level testing with interested participants to match them to the correct class based on their level.
- Some baseline questions that could be asked include:
  - a. How would you rate your English language skills for everyday communication? (a) Beginner; (b) Basic; (c) Intermediate; (d) Advanced.
  - b. How confident are you in using English to apply for a job (CV, interview, application forms)? (a) Not confident at all; (b) Somewhat confident; (c) Confident; (d) Very confident.
  - c. Have you ever applied for a job in Ireland? (a) Yes; (b) No; (c) I don't know how to apply for jobs here.
  - d. Do you currently have access to English language classes or support in your area? (a) Yes; (b) No; (c) Not sure.
  - e. How connected do you feel to your local community in Ireland? (a) Very connected; (b) Somewhat connected; (c) Not very connected; (d) Not connected at all.

#### **Pre-Intervention Assessments:**

Participants can complete pre-intervention surveys to assess their current status, including indicators such as stress, depression, anxiety, trauma, and social isolation. The assessments will also explore challenges faced in daily life, such as language barriers, employment, documentation issues, and adaptation difficulties, as well as levels of social connection, participation in community activities, and overall sense of belonging in the local society.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### ***Performance Indicators:***

#### **Pre- and Mid-Intervention mechanisms implementors can introduce to collect:**

1. Number of participants attending each session, recorded using sign-in sheets or digital attendance trackers.
2. Baseline information on participants' language ability, confidence, and sense of belonging, gathered through pre-intervention self-assessment surveys.
3. Feedback on initial expectations and motivations for participation, collected through intake forms or informal interviews.
4. Midpoint assessments of participants' progress in communication, confidence, or social engagement, using simplified reflection tools or surveys.
5. Self-reported mental wellbeing scores, collected at pre- and mid-intervention stages to track change in stress, isolation, and mood.
6. Number and type of workshops delivered, recorded using an activity log or digital event tracker.
7. Level of engagement, assessed through participation in activities, discussions, peer sessions, and mentoring.
8. Feedback from volunteers, peer facilitators, and staff, to evaluate programme delivery and identify emerging needs.
9. Observed improvements in employability skills or community integration, captured through mid-intervention reflections, focus groups, or one-to-one check-ins.

#### **Post-Intervention Indicators implementors can introduce:**

1. Post-intervention assessment of participants' confidence, communication skills, and mental wellbeing, using the same self-assessment tools from the pre- and mid-intervention phases to measure change.
2. Changes in participants' reported sense of inclusion, community connection, and readiness for work or further education, captured through post-programme surveys or informal interviews.
3. Qualitative feedback from participants on the usefulness of the intervention, challenges faced, and how they plan to apply what they've learned, gathered via surveys, focus groups, or reflection forms.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### Adaptation Process:

1. Feedback will be collected after each session through short surveys and informal conversations.
2. Facilitators and coordinators will meet regularly to review feedback and share observations.
3. Training content will be adjusted based on emerging language needs, cultural considerations, or learner confidence.
4. Delivery methods may be adapted to include simpler language, more visuals, or blended learning formats as needed.

### Timelines:

#### Months 1–2:

1. Finalise programme design, learning objectives, and resource materials.
2. Secure training venues and coordinate logistics with community partners.

#### Month 3:

1. Recruit and train English language facilitators, job skills trainers, and peer support workers.
2. Establish partnerships with local businesses and community organisations.

#### Month 4:

1. Launch the programme with first English and employability sessions.
2. Begin pre-intervention assessments and participant profiling.

#### Months 4–9:

1. Continue weekly training sessions and mentoring activities.
2. Organise monthly feedback check-ins, peer support circles, and progress reviews.
3. Maintain active volunteer and mentor involvement.

#### Months 7–8:

1. Conduct mid-intervention evaluations to measure language progress, confidence, and job readiness.
2. Adjust content and delivery based on participant feedback.

#### Months 10–12:

1. Deliver mock interviews, career fairs, and final mentoring sessions.
2. Complete post-intervention evaluations and compare data to initial assessments.
3. Develop personalised next-step plans with each participant.
4. Host a closing event and share outcomes with stakeholders.
5. Compile and present final report with recommendations for scaling or sustaining the programme



## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### Milestones:

#### Months 1–2:

1. Conduct baseline assessments and identify participants.
2. Finalise programme design, materials, and logistics.

#### Month 3:

1. Recruit and train facilitators and peer support workers.
2. Establish partnerships with employers and support organisations.

#### Months 4–9:

1. Deliver weekly language and employability training sessions.
2. Organise regular mentoring and peer support activities.
3. Collect monthly feedback and monitor participation.

#### Months 7–8:

1. Conduct mock interviews with employers and training partners.
2. Adjust content and methods based on participant feedback.

#### Months 10–12:

1. Run post-programme assessments and final participant evaluations.
2. Prepare a final report and present findings to stakeholders.
3. Host a community event to celebrate the programme's completion.

### Feedback Mechanisms

#### Feedback Channels:

1. **Anonymous Surveys and Attendance Tracking:** Youth participants will be invited to complete short, anonymous surveys after events or workshops to rate their experiences, facilitators, and content. Attendance will also be tracked to identify engagement patterns, helping implementers understand which sessions are most effective and whether any barriers to participation exist.
2. **Focus Groups and 1:1 Conversations:** Midway and at the end of the intervention, group discussions will be held to gather open feedback on what participants find most valuable, and what could be improved. One-to-one conversations with youth and volunteers will be used to gather deeper insights, especially from those who may be less confident in group settings.
3. **Creative and Media-Based Feedback:** Young people will be encouraged to share their thoughts through short video testimonials, written reflections, or drawings. These materials can both inform programme development and support outreach by showcasing positive experiences.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### ***Advocacy Mechanisms:***

#### **Policy Advocacy:**

1. Use pre and post-intervention data to highlight improvements in mental health, well-being, and integration.
2. Provide briefs linking workshops to social inclusion and migrant support goals.
3. Present the intervention as cost-effective, reducing long-term healthcare and social service expenses.
4. Collaborate with local NGOs and community groups to build support and amplify the message.
5. Utilize media to raise awareness through real stories, fostering public support.
6. Host webinars and conferences with stakeholders to increase visibility and encourage discussion.

#### **Awareness Campaigns and Promotion:**

1. Collaboration with local organizations to inform migrants and refugees about the workshops.
2. Community meetings to explain the workshops' benefits and registration process.
3. Using social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to promote workshops and provide easy registration links.
4. Sharing of success stories to highlight the impact of the workshops and encourage participation.

### ***Resource Requirements and Allocation:***

#### **Financial Resources:**

1. Venue rental, facilitator fees, materials (e.g., handouts, printed resources)
2. Costs for digital advertising, social media campaigns, and media outreach.
3. Transportation and catering of participants.

#### **Human Resources:**

1. Professionals or trained peer educators to conduct workshops.
2. Coordinators, outreach workers, and volunteers to help with logistics, registration, and translation services.
3. Staff from local NGOs and universities to assist with outreach, coordination, and participant recruitment.
4. Translators or multilingual volunteers.

## Intervention 2

# Language and Employability Skills Development Programme for Migrant Youth

### ***Resource Requirements and Allocation:***

#### **Financial Resources:**

1. Venue hire (where not provided in-kind), facilitator fees, volunteer stipends, and materials such as games, stationery, refreshments, and workshop supplies.
2. Costs for promotional materials, social media advertising, and community outreach campaigns.
3. Transport supports for participants (e.g., bus passes, bike repair schemes) and light catering for community events or hub sessions

#### **Human Resources:**

1. Professionals or trained peer educators to conduct workshops.
2. Coordinators, outreach workers, and volunteers to help with logistics, registration, and translation services.
3. Staff from local NGOs and universities to assist with outreach, coordination, and participant recruitment.
4. Interpreters or multilingual volunteers

#### **Material Resources:**

1. Printed handouts, worksheets, and CV templates.
2. Recreational resources such as board games, gaming consoles, books, and music speakers.
3. Art and craft supplies (e.g., paints, markers, paper) for creative activities, youth-led projects, and promotional materials.
4. Basic IT equipment (e.g., laptops, projectors, Wi-Fi routers) for blended learning, presentations, and digital skills sessions.

#### **Resource Allocation:**

1. Prioritise delivery in rural or underserved areas with limited access to youth services, especially where migrant and vulnerable youth experience social isolation.
2. Allocate resources to support venues that are already used by or accessible to young people, including GAA clubs, libraries, Family Resource Centres, and community halls.
3. Direct funding towards the training of facilitators and volunteers to ensure inclusive, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive service delivery.

## End of Intervention 2

### ***What is the intervention?***

This intervention aims to empower vulnerable youth aged 14–30 by using physical activities as a mental health support tool while fostering a sense of community. The program will be divided into two age groups: minors (14–17) and young adults (18–30), with separate activities to ensure age-appropriate engagement. This intervention aims to support the social inclusion and wellbeing of vulnerable and migrant youth aged 14–30 by transforming existing community spaces into safe, welcoming, and youth-friendly hubs. These hubs will offer informal drop-in spaces as well as structured social and cultural activities tailored to the needs of young people living in rural areas.

The programme will be inclusive of two age groups: adolescents (14–17) and young adults (18–30), with flexible schedules to accommodate school, work, or care commitments. Activities can take place during weekday evenings or weekends and may include creative workshops, games, discussion circles, music nights, or cultural exchange events.

Community hubs will be hosted in accessible venues such as libraries, GAA clubs, schools, or local halls, with the aim of creating consistent, centralised spaces where young people feel safe, respected, and engaged. The intervention will be facilitated by trained staff or volunteers, with opportunities for youth leadership and peer involvement.

The hub model will also adapt during key exam periods. During these times, the hubs can function as study-friendly spaces, offering drop-in access to tables, snacks, and a quiet, relaxed atmosphere. This allows young people to revise individually or in small groups, supporting their educational wellbeing in a low-pressure, supportive setting.

By providing these consistent spaces for connection, relaxation, and creative expression, the intervention seeks to reduce social isolation, build resilience, and foster a stronger sense of belonging among vulnerable youth in rural Ireland.

### ***Target implementers of the intervention:***

The target implementers of the intervention include GAA clubs, local government and public authorities, community groups and charities, local businesses with office space, the hospitality sector, such as hotels with underutilised rooms, and schools & educational institutions.

### *Components and activities:*

- Weekly **drop-in sessions** offering board games, music, refreshments, and social activities to create a relaxed, youth-friendly space for connection and conversation.
- **Creative and recreational activities** such as art workshops, film screenings, and gaming nights designed to support emotional wellbeing and encourage participation.
- **Cultural and community events** including themed meals, intercultural evenings, and community-led projects to build belonging and promote mutual understanding.
- **Youth-led planning and engagement**, where young people help design and shape the hub's layout, activities, and atmosphere, fostering ownership and leadership skills.





### **Tasks and Subtasks:**

#### **1. Identify and secure suitable community spaces for youth hubs**

- a. Approach libraries, GAA clubs, community centres, and schools to explore free or low-cost access to youth-friendly spaces.
- b. Assess accessibility (e.g., ramps, transport links) and safety features.
- c. Obtain necessary permissions or agreements for regular use of the venue.

#### **2. Furnish and equip the hubs based on youth input**

- a. Consult with young people on desired equipment and layout (e.g., gaming area, conversation zone, refreshment corner).
- b. Acquire or request donations of TVs, beanbags, games, and other youth-friendly resources.
- c. Ensure the hub includes inclusive signage and multilingual materials where appropriate.

#### **3. Provide refreshments and create a welcoming atmosphere**

- a. Stock healthy snacks, water, and youth-friendly drinks for free or low-cost access.
- b. Ensure food safety standards are met and consider dietary preferences.
- c. Display clear codes of conduct to promote respect and inclusion in shared spaces.

#### **4. Recruit and support a team of youth-friendly volunteers**

- a. Launch a volunteer call through social media and local networks.
- b. Partner with Family Resource Centres and youth services for recruitment and screening.
- c. Offer basic training on safeguarding, communication, and community engagement.

#### **5. Design a schedule of structured and unstructured activities**

- a. Create a weekly or monthly calendar of events based on young people's interests.
- b. Include a mix of drop-in social hours and planned activities (e.g. film nights, art workshops).
- c. Publicise the calendar using posters, social media, and community partners.

#### **6. Promote youth engagement and leadership in hub development**

- a. Form a small youth advisory group to co-design activities and advise on the layout.
- b. Encourage peer-led sessions or events.
- c. Recognise contributions through certificates or volunteer awards.

### **Tasks and Subtasks:**

#### **7. Monitor usage and gather feedback for ongoing improvement**

- a. Track attendance, activity engagement, and space usage.
- b. Use short surveys, a suggestion box, or informal check-ins to gather feedback.
- c. Share findings with youth and volunteers, and adapt accordingly.

#### **8. Promote the hubs and maintain community visibility**

- a. Share regular updates on activities through schools, local newsletters, WhatsApp groups, and youth-facing social media.
- b. Showcase success stories and testimonials to encourage participation.
- c. Coordinate with local services to build referrals and strengthen hub sustainability.

### **Relevant Stakeholders:**

1. **Government Agencies and Local Authorities:** Local County Councils, Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT), Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), and *Community and Enterprise Units*
2. **Educational Institutions:** Education and Training Boards (ETBs), Adult Learning Centres, post-primary schools, and further education colleges
3. **Community and Migrant Support Organisations:** Family Resource Centres, Local Development Companies, migrant-led groups (e.g., Association of Ukrainians in Ireland), intercultural projects
4. **Youth Organisations:** Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, Garda Youth Diversion Projects, youth councils
5. **Professionals:** Youth workers, social workers, community development officers, English language teachers, ancillary staff, job coaches, counsellors, and artists
6. **Local Businesses and Sector Representatives:** Employers, hospitality sector businesses, business networks (e.g., BNI, Network Ireland), workplace mentors
7. **Local Sports and Recreation Networks:** GAA clubs, community sports facilities, local youth sports organisations
8. **Young People and Peer Facilitators:** Migrant and local youth engaged in co-design, peer mentoring, and leadership roles (relevant across all three interventions)

### Nature of Partnership Strategy that implementors can work towards:

#### 1. Government Agencies and Local Authorities

- a. Provide funding, infrastructure, and policy alignment in line with national youth, integration, and education strategies.
- b. Support outreach efforts through youth services, Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), and Local Authority Integration Teams (LAIT).
- c. Offer access to public venues such as libraries, sports halls, and community rooms for programme delivery.

#### 2. Educational Institutions

- a. Promote the intervention to students and families through secondary schools, ETBs, and Adult Education Centres.
- b. Offer venues (e.g., classrooms, sports facilities) for use during evenings or weekends.
- c. Support learner progression through guidance counselling, literacy supports, or digital skill workshops.

#### 3. Community and Migrant Support Organisations

- a. Provide frontline support, peer outreach, and referrals through Family Resource Centres, migrant-led organisations, and intercultural centres.
- b. Facilitate recruitment of participants and volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- c. Offer psychosocial or integration-related services to complement core activities.

#### 4. Youth and Sports Organisations

- a. Host weekly activities or drop-in sessions within their venues.
- b. Share equipment (e.g., games, sports gear) or trained facilitators.
- c. Support young people's engagement through existing youth clubs or sports networks.

#### 5. Charities and Mental Health Organisations

- a. Deliver wellbeing-focused sessions on resilience, stress, and social connection, especially for vulnerable or isolated youth.
- b. Offer trained counsellors or facilitators to support youth during workshops or activities.
- c. Assist in identifying early signs of distress and refer young people to appropriate services.

### **Nature of Partnership Strategy that implementors can work towards:**

#### **6. Local Businesses and Hospitality Sector**

- a. Provide sponsorship (e.g., materials, refreshments, transport vouchers) or allow use of underutilised space (e.g., hotel meeting rooms, café backrooms).
- b. Participate in mentoring and mock interviews to support migrant youth's employability.
- c. Promote the programme within their customer networks and staff teams.

#### **7. Trained Migrants and Peer Facilitators**

- a. Act as community connectors by co-facilitating conversation circles, mentoring sessions, and cultural exchange events.
- b. Help bridge language and cultural gaps, particularly in employability and youth-led planning activities.
- c. Receive recognition or certificates for their contribution to the intervention.

#### **8. Young People and Community Leaders**

- a. Young people will co-design events, lead promotional activities, and build peer interest in the hubs or social programmes.
- b. Community leaders can promote the programme through local networks and contribute cultural expertise, mentorship, or strategic input.
- c. Both groups can play key roles in sustaining engagement and ensuring the programme remains relevant to local needs.

### **Capacity-Building Training for professionals Development in areas such as:**

**1. Cultural Awareness and Diversity:** Facilitators and volunteers should receive training on cultural sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion to ensure respectful engagement with migrant and minority youth. This includes recognising unconscious bias, understanding cultural norms, and creating inclusive environments.

**2. Youth Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Practice:** Training should cover mental health awareness, youth-specific trauma, and how to respond appropriately to emotional or behavioural challenges. Workshops in trauma-informed care and mental health first aid are essential for ensuring a safe and supportive environment.

**3. Community Hub and Safe Space Management:** Volunteers managing community hubs should be trained on maintaining welcoming, accessible, and youth-centred environments. Training will also include procedures for venue upkeep, safeguarding, and managing multi-use spaces effectively.

**4. Children and Vulnerable Adult Protection (Safeguarding):** All facilitators working directly with young people must complete certified child protection training, including Tusla's Children First Programme, and understand their legal and ethical responsibilities in safeguarding minors and vulnerable adults.

### ***Capacity-Building Training for professionals Development in areas such as:***



**5.Conflict Resolution and Communication:** Facilitators will benefit from training in conflict management, de-escalation strategies, and positive communication techniques to ensure a peaceful and respectful atmosphere in community hubs and group activities.

**6.Activity Planning and Delivery:** Workshops will train facilitators in planning inclusive, engaging social and cultural events – including games nights, workshops, and youth-led initiatives – tailored to different age groups and interest levels.

**7.First Aid and Emergency Response:** General first aid and mental health first aid training should be provided to all professionals and volunteers. This includes CPR, response to minor injuries, and recognising signs of psychological distress.

**8.Volunteer Retention and Youth Engagement Strategies:** Training should include techniques to keep both volunteers and youth engaged over time. This includes participatory approaches, leadership opportunities, and feedback-based programme design.

**9.Monitoring and Evaluation:** Facilitators should be trained to track participation, gather feedback, and measure outcomes using simple monitoring tools. This helps ensure continuous improvement and alignment with participant needs and project goals.

### ***Baselines & Milestones:***

#### **Baseline Data:**

- Identify existing community spaces that can be used as Community Hubs. Assess their suitability to see if they are accessible for young people, people with additional needs, such as reduced mobility, and other marginalized individuals.
- Conduct surveys or research to understand and evaluate social isolation experienced by rural young people in Ireland. Some questions that could be asked include:
  - a.Is there a place in your community where you regularly go to relax, socialise, or meet people your own age? (a) Yes; (b) No; (c) Sometimes.
  - b.How safe do you feel when spending time in public spaces in your area (e.g., parks, cafés, community centres)? (a) Very safe; (b) Somewhat safe; (c) Unsafe; (d) I don't go to public spaces.
  - c.How often do you spend time with other young people outside of school or work? (a) Every day; (b) A few times per week; (c) Rarely; (d) Never.
  - d.Do you feel your community offers a welcoming space for all young people, regardless of background? (a) Yes; (b) Sometimes; (c) No; (d) Not sure.
  - e.Would you attend a local youth hub if it offered games, refreshments, and space to hang out? (a) Yes; (b) Maybe; (c) No; (d) I'd need more information.



### **Baselines & Milestones:**

#### **Pre-Intervention Assessments:**

Participants can complete pre-intervention surveys to assess their current status, including indicators such as stress, depression, anxiety, trauma, and social isolation. The assessments will also explore challenges faced in daily life, such as language barriers, employment, documentation issues, and adaptation difficulties, as well as levels of social connection, participation in community activities, and overall sense of belonging in the local society.

#### **Performance Indicators:**

##### **Pre- and Mid-Intervention mechanisms implementors can introduce to collect:**

1. Number of participants attending each session, recorded using sign-in sheets or digital attendance trackers.
2. Baseline information on participants' language ability, confidence, and sense of belonging, gathered through pre-intervention self-assessment surveys.
3. Feedback on initial expectations and motivations for participation, collected through intake forms or informal interviews.
4. Midpoint assessments of participants' progress in communication, confidence, or social engagement, using simplified reflection tools or surveys.
5. Self-reported mental wellbeing scores, collected at pre- and mid-intervention stages to track change in stress, isolation, and mood.
6. Number and type of workshops delivered, recorded using an activity log or digital event tracker.
7. Level of engagement, assessed through participation in activities, discussions, peer sessions, and mentoring.
8. Feedback from volunteers, peer facilitators, and staff, to evaluate programme delivery and identify emerging needs.
9. Observed improvements in employability skills or community integration, captured through mid-intervention reflections, focus groups, or one-to-one check-ins.

##### **Post-Intervention Indicators implementors can introduce:**

1. Post-intervention assessment of participants' confidence, communication skills, and mental wellbeing, using the same self-assessment tools from the pre- and mid-intervention phases to measure change.
2. Changes in participants' reported sense of inclusion, community connection, and readiness for work or further education, captured through post-programme surveys or informal interviews.
3. Qualitative feedback from participants on the usefulness of the intervention, challenges faced, and how they plan to apply what they've learned, gathered via surveys, focus groups, or reflection forms.

### Adaptation Process:

1. Monthly review meetings with staff and volunteers to assess attendance, feedback, and engagement trends.
2. Incorporate young people's suggestions into future activity planning and space improvements.
3. Adjust hub schedules, activity formats, or equipment based on usage patterns and participant preferences.

### Timelines:

#### Months 1–2:

1. Finalise programme design, layout, and activity types based on youth input.
2. Identify and secure suitable venues (e.g., community centres, libraries, schools).
3. Recruit and train volunteers to manage and support hub activities.
4. Source furnishings, games, and supplies to create a welcoming environment.
5. Develop accessibility plans and safety protocols for hub operation.

#### Months 3–6:

1. Launch outreach campaigns through schools, youth services, and community networks.
2. Open the Community Hub and begin weekly drop-in sessions and structured activities.
3. Begin pre-intervention engagement tracking and informal participant feedback.
4. Continue recruiting and training volunteers as the hub grows.

#### Month 6:

1. Review attendance, engagement, and feedback from youth and volunteers.
2. Adjust activity offerings, layout, or schedule based on participation trends and requests.

#### Months 10–12:

1. Conduct final feedback sessions with young people and volunteers.
2. Evaluate the impact of the hub on youth wellbeing and community connection.
3. Prepare and share a final report with local stakeholders and funders.
4. Host a closing event to celebrate achievements and present future plans for sustainability.

### Milestones:

#### Months 1–2:

1. Secure funding, confirm partnerships, and finalise the programme design and layout for the Community Hubs.
2. Identify and secure youth-friendly venues and begin volunteer recruitment and training.
3. Organise a visit to an existing community centre currently delivering similar youth programming. This visit will involve volunteers to provide them with an opportunity to observe the setup, atmosphere, and operational practices first-hand.

#### Month 3:

1. Launch local promotional campaigns and community outreach.
2. Train staff and volunteers on hub activities, safeguarding, and youth engagement.

#### Months 3–6:

1. Complete baseline assessments and open the Community Hubs.
2. Begin weekly activities and informal drop-in sessions for young people.

#### Month 6:

1. Conduct a mid-term review to evaluate participation, feedback, and operational needs.
2. Make adjustments to the schedule, layout, or activity types based on youth input.

#### Month 12:

1. Administer post-programme surveys and focus groups.
2. Prepare a final evaluation report and host a community event to share results and celebrate the hubs' success.

### Feedback Channels:

- **Anonymous Surveys and Attendance Tracking:** Youth participants will be invited to complete short, anonymous surveys after events or workshops to rate their experiences, facilitators, and content. Attendance will also be tracked to identify engagement patterns, helping implementers understand which sessions are most effective and whether any barriers to participation exist.
- **Focus Groups and 1:1 Conversations:** Midway and at the end of the intervention, group discussions will be held to gather open feedback on what participants find most valuable, and what could be improved. One-to-one conversations with youth and volunteers will be used to gather deeper insights, especially from those who may be less confident in group settings.
- **Creative and Media-Based Feedback:** Young people will be encouraged to share their thoughts through short video testimonials, written reflections, or drawings. These materials can both inform programme development and support outreach by showcasing positive experiences.

### ***Advocacy Mechanisms:***

#### **Policy Advocacy:**

- Use pre and post-intervention data to highlight improvements in mental health, well-being, and integration.
- Provide briefs linking workshops to social inclusion and migrant support goals.
- Present the intervention as cost-effective, reducing long-term healthcare and social service expenses.
- Collaborate with local NGOs and community groups to build support and amplify the message.
- Utilize media to raise awareness through real stories, fostering public support.
- Host webinars and conferences with stakeholders to increase visibility and encourage discussion.

#### **Awareness Campaigns and Promotion:**

- Collaboration with local organizations to inform migrants and refugees about the workshops.
- Community meetings to explain the workshops' benefits and registration process.
- Using social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to promote workshops and provide easy registration links.
- Sharing of success stories to highlight the impact of the workshops and encourage participation.

### ***Resource Requirements and Allocation:***

#### **Financial Resources:**

1. Venue hire (where not provided in-kind), facilitator fees, volunteer stipends, and materials such as games, stationery, refreshments, and workshop supplies.
2. Costs for promotional materials, social media advertising, and community outreach campaigns.
3. Transport supports for participants (e.g., bus passes, bike repair schemes) and light catering for community events or hub sessions

#### **Human Resources:**

1. Professionals or trained peer educators to conduct workshops.
2. Coordinators, outreach workers, and volunteers to help with logistics, registration, and translation services.
3. Staff from local NGOs and universities to assist with outreach, coordination, and participant recruitment.
4. Interpreters or multilingual volunteers

### ***Resource Requirements and Allocation:***

#### **Material Resources:**

1. Comfortable seating (e.g., beanbags, chairs), tables, and room dividers to create welcoming zones
2. Recreational resources such as board games, gaming consoles, books, and music speakers
3. Art and craft supplies (e.g., paints, markers, paper) for creative activities, youth-led projects, and promotional materials
4. Basic IT equipment (e.g., laptops, projectors, Wi-Fi routers) for blended learning, presentations, and digital skills sessions

#### **Resource Allocation:**

1. Prioritise delivery in rural or underserved areas with limited access to youth services, especially where migrant and vulnerable youth experience social isolation.
2. Allocate resources to support venues that are already used by or accessible to young people, including GAA clubs, libraries, Family Resource Centres, and community halls.
3. Direct funding towards the training of facilitators and volunteers to ensure inclusive, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive service delivery.

## End of Intervention Section





# INTERVENTION ROADMAPS: FOR AT-RISK YOUTH INTEGRATION IN BULGARIA

## About the Project

This report was produced as part of the BEYOND project, a cross-national initiative aiming to enhance the inclusion, well-being, and civic participation of migrant and refugee youth across Europe. The project is coordinated by Generation for Change CY, a migrant-led grassroots organization based in Cyprus, and is implemented in partnership with Blackwater Training & Consulting in Ireland and the Foundation "Situational Center Open Doors" in Bulgaria.



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