

**“Youth HQ”
on the island of
Ireland:**

**impossible
or
inevitable?**

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1. Introduction

“To build for man a world without fear, we must be without fear. To build a world of justice, we must be just. And how can we fight for liberty if we are not free in our own minds? How can we ask others to sacrifice if we are not ready to do so?”¹

Today, the world is in turmoil, and we must learn to navigate through it. Today, we are “bombarded” with mixed messages, of what we “could be”, what we “should be”, or worse... that we are not “good enough”. Imagine now how a young person must feel? What can possibly go through the mind and heart of this person in the midst of this whirlwind of words and images? What boxes are we all trying to fit exactly and for who?

How vital it is then for the younger members of our society to know that it is through their unique talents and potentials that they can be the change they want to see? What would it look like if they could find the answers to their questions and to their needs for their present - and their future - in one single place in the heart of the community they live in? A place where they can take “refuge” and feel welcomed and accepted... A physical building of some sort where their intellectual, physical, social, mental, and economic needs are being met... A place where they can learn that it is through knowledge, patience, resilience, experiences, and resources that one can acquire a new set of skills - or refine the ones they already have - to better their own lives and the lives of the people around them?

In Paris, France, there is an example of a space like that. It’s called the “[Quartier Jeunes](#)” (QJ), - also known as Youth Quarter or HQ – directed by the Municipality of Paris in close partnership with youth organisations, businesses, public services and young people themselves. It’s an entire building, dedicated to the well-being and the empowerment of any young person from 16 to 30 years old with open access to a wide range of services, free of charge. Over 50,000 youth from Paris and its surroundings entered this space in the first year since September 2021.

After her visit to the QJ in March 2022, Ms. Carmel Irandoust, Founder of [NETLOVE](#) returned to the island of Ireland and started meaningful conversations about it with those committed to the interests of the young people: in Derry-Londonderry, in Galway and in Dublin. She knew that if people would see the QJ, they would probably be inspired by it.

Not that this kind of place doesn’t already exist on the island because it probably does and it is not about “copy-paste” anyways - nothing good comes out of that! - but rather, it is about learning from the QJ Model, its founding principles, its system of governance and its mode of operation because this is what makes it unique and one of a kind.

¹ Dag Hammarskjöld

Following up on these conversations, four youth organisations showed a keen interest in the QJ Model – 1 in the south, 3 in the north and they wanted to travel with NETLOVE to see it. The organisations located in Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland were [Hurt](#), [Reach Across](#), and [Youth Action NI](#) – and the one organisation in Galway, Ireland was [Youth Work Ireland Galway](#). The All-Island Delegation was then formed. The visit to the QJ in Paris, France, took place in December 2022.

So, what are the ingredients of this “QJ”? It is not a “perfect” model, but it works well. Why? Is there anything this island can possibly learn about it that they don’t know about already?

An event called “Youth HQ in Derry-Londonderry: impossible or inevitable?” was held few months after this visit, by the four organisations from Northern Ireland with an additional youth organisation called [North West Youth Services](#) who sponsored it. The purpose of the event was to share some insights from this trip and explore the relevance of such a facility in the region and what could be the next steps to have one with the attendees.

This document is a summary about the QJ adventure, and it is our hope that you’ll get something from it. It includes: 1/ An introduction - 2/ The QJ | Youth HQ - 3/A summary of the All-Island Delegation’s visit to the QJ in Paris, France - 4/ A thought-provoking event held in Northern Ireland about the visit - 5/ Outcomes and the next steps, and 6/A conclusion. It also includes photos of all these different conversations.

Today, the path each young person will embark on will have a direct impact on the present and the future of every one of us. Young people are the ones who can directly and wholeheartedly contribute to build a more prosperous, sustainable, just, peaceful, and respectful place for all. Their role is great, but their challenges are greater. This is why it is important to have systems and processes of “accompaniment and empowerment” in place that are simple, straightforward, and effective which can answer the needs of our young people and guide their steps towards their hopes and dreams, free from fear and self-doubt.

If we want our future decision-makers to lead the way, we must align our thoughts, our words, and our actions together - with one another - in a spirit of cooperation, not competition.

It is our hope that as many groups, public servants, elected representatives, members of the greater community and young persons will join this discussion around the “Youth HQ”. Again, there are probably many spaces like this, but it’s worth exploring the QJ Model.

Another visit to the QJ in Paris, France could take place in the next few months so... Let’s connect!



From Left to Right: Cathereen Wells (HURT), Denise Doherty (Youth Action NI), Shauna Donnelly (Reach Across), Carmel Irandoust (NETLOVE), Isabel Daly and Deirdre Birmingham (Youth Work Ireland GALWAY) in front of the Quartier Jeunes. Paris, France, 4 December 2022

2. The QJ | Youth HQ

What is it?

A “House for Youth”. It’s an entire building, dedicated to the accompaniment and empowerment of young people leading to their well-being. There are different areas – also known as “quartier”² – where each service is located, dedicated to the physical, social, mental health, intellectual, economic, and emotional needs of young people. Services such as mental health, employment, housing, legal advisers, and food are provided through close accompaniment of professionals. For the first-year anniversary of the QJ, the Café QJ was inaugurated, open to all, not only to young people.

What services are offered?

A centre of information for young people - 16 to 30 years old - related to youth empowerment and autonomy is at the heart of the QJ. Following this, different services - all free of charge because they are state/city of Paris funded - are represented within the QJ. They do not work in silos and collaborate often. Few NGOs and public/private agencies are included in each “quartier”:

- **Health** - Mental Health services with several therapists, psychologists who are on sites on specific days/times. Calls can also be scheduled. Workshops on addictions are held regularly.
- **Employment** - CV writing, interviews prepping, fairs, jobs searching, trainings, etc. Workshops are held regularly.
- **Information** – Learn about rights, free access to a variety of resources, housing, volunteering, parents’ corner, future plans, disability corner, etc.
- **Legal Services** - Private/Public lawyers are available for free consultation.
- **Solidarity/Food Bank** – After the Pandemic, young people need assistance with food.
- **Adventure/leisure** - Cultural, artistic and travel services, discounts on movies, museums, theatres, travels are offered for young people all year round.

Free access, free of charge and open to all, these different services are available to young people from Mondays to Saturdays from 11 am to 6 pm. A series of workshops is offered week after week, each time with different themes and according to the needs of the youth. See below what a week looked like at the QJ last December 2022 while the delegation was there:

² “Neighbourhood or quarter” in French

- **Monday 05/12 (pro):** “Succeed your interview” from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm | “Manage your professional image” from 2 pm to 5 pm.
- **Tuesday 06/12:** “Workshop 100% female power” from 2 pm to 6 pm
- **Wednesday 07/12:** “Addiction Workshop (tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, screens) Let’s talk about it!” from 2 pm to 6 pm | “Love, Sex, & Fun” workshop to inform, to listen and to counsel from 2 pm to 4 pm | “Workshop: Find a job or an internship” from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm | “Day of Universities from 10 am to 5 pm – must register! Come and speak to representatives and/or student ambassadors”.
- **Thursday 08/12:** “Workshop Art Therapy: Take a break around a photocollage workshop” from 2 pm to 6 pm.
- **Friday 09/12:** “Succeed your project: identify your competences/skills and improve your self-esteem” from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm.
- **Saturday 10/12:** “Discovery Workshop: Architecture studies in the region of Ile-de-France at 10.30 am” | “How to join a business school at 1 pm” | “How to join an engineering school at 3 pm”.

More information about the QJ can be found [here](#) | @QJPARI (IG)

How did it all start?

The Youth HQ was born after the Mayor of Paris told the media that she wanted to create a place for young people that can answer their needs and facilitate their empowerment, a sort of a **“House for Youth”**³. Great were the challenges faced by young people during/after the Pandemic which highlighted the needs for such a place to exist. The office in charge of implementing this initiative got organised then. A number of consultations took place after this announcement – few including over 500 young people for three months. Their inputs were gathered, and it helped the office to bring about the concept of the QJ “Quartier Jeunes” to life. The name came from young people themselves. From the day it was initially advertised publicly back in January 2021, it took 9 months for it to come into fruition. The “House for Youth” opened its doors in September 2021.

The Municipality of Paris stresses upon the fact that this place exists according to the wishes of young people. The governmental institution diligently followed what their young people shared during these initial consultations: not only did they pick the name of the place, but they decided that there would be no queuing, no need for proof of identity, and that it would be a free-flowing place. It would be a space where “all” would feel welcomed - between 16 to 30 years old – “all” as in: any young person, students or not, job seekers or not, anyone looking for an internship, any young person in need or not, from Paris and from its surroundings, especially those facing greater challenges or from the “quartiers populaires”⁴.

³ “Maison pour la Jeunesse”

⁴ A recent term used to describe the suburbs.

How is it structured?

The system of governance is interesting. It is a consultative body composed of four different “collèges”⁵ of 20 persons each who are meeting regularly: the business group, the civil society group with representatives of the QJ, the institutional/municipality group and the youth group. The young people are fully involved in the decision-making process and feed consultations through their experiences and wishes of current/future of the QJ.

Recently, more consultations are being held regularly between the different services within the QJ so they can gather learning, refine their mode of operations and get to know each other’s successes and challenges in order to best serve their audience.

What makes the greatest success of the QJ is not only the ongoing participation of all actors, but also the close partnership between them. At the level of the institutions (be it political, financial, educational etc.), at the level of the community (civil society, NGOs public or private) and at the level of the individuals (young people, greater public)- it seems that all are trying to make it work, not without its challenges but the will is there... and where there is will... there is a way!

Who is visiting the QJ?

Albeit difficult to capture the coming and going of over 50,000 persons the first year, a “quick survey” took place in the summer of 2022:

450 people participated :

- **64.% of the young people** who participated in this survey are **women**.
- A large majority of young people are **between 17 and 25 years old**, with an equal repartition of ages in this bracket.
- **43.9% live in Paris** – **14.6% come from another region** Hauts-de-Seine – **11% come from another region** Seine-Saint-Denis and so forth.
- Within Paris, 10,7 % come from the 20th arrondissement⁶; 6,3 % from the 19th; 8,8 % from the 18th; 8,3 % from the 15th; 8,3 % from the 14th; 8,8 % from the 13th; the other arrondissements are represented equally- around 6,8 % for the 10th arrondissement and 2 % for the 8th.
- **55.1% of the young people** visited the QJ **with friends**.
- **37.4%** visited the QJ **alone**.
- **6.8%** visited the QJ **with a professional**.

More information about the QJ, its work and its budget can be found [here](#).

⁵ “Body”, “Committee” in French

⁶ “rounding” in French, “small district”.

3. An All-Island delegation visits the “QJ” in Paris, France.

How did it happen?

After a short visit to the “Quartier Jeunes” in Paris, France, in March 2022, Ms. Carmel Irandoust, Founder of NETLOVE, came back to the island of Ireland with the idea of forming an All-Island delegation to visit this exceptional building dedicated to the accompaniment and the empowerment of young people from 16 to 30 years old who live in Paris and its surroundings.

After numerous conversations with elected representatives from Derry-Londonderry - all political parties included - and with youth organisations, from the north and the south of the island of Ireland, it is ultimately youth organisations who showed a keen interest to visit the Youth HQ – 1 in the south, 3 in the north. The organisations located in Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland are [Hurt](#), [Reach Across](#), and [Youth Action NI](#) – and the one organisation in Galway, Ireland is [Youth Work Ireland Galway](#).

All joined [NETLOVE](#) then and formed an All-Island delegation to visit the QJ in Paris, France for a couple of days in December 2022.

The QJ Model

The four organisations met few times before heading to Paris, France reflecting and planning the purpose of their visit and defining the objects of learnings they wanted to gain. One organisation -Hurt- consulted with its own young people from the “Right Here, Right now” Programme to formulate questions too.

The delegation arrived on Monday 5th December 2022, welcomed by three civil servants working for the Municipality of Paris, France: Mr. Thomas Rogé, Head of the Youth Affairs Services (Chef du service des Politiques de Jeunesse), Ms. Bettina Manchel, Director of the QJ, and Mr. Aurélien Lesné, Deputy Director of the QJ.

They shared information about the history of the QJ, the structure, the services it offers, and gave a tour of the facilities.

Discussions also took place with different representatives of different “quartiers”: health, employment and adventure who shared about the work they do and the receptivity of young people towards these services.

Over 50,000 young people entered the QJ the first year.

Insights from the All-Island delegation after the visit:

- We were impressed by the willingness of the Municipality of Paris and services to prioritise young people. It was done in a short space of time. When decisions are made from the top things flow.
- “I’ve never seen anything like that where all the NGOs are all under one place.” “In some places, youth organisations must fight for the same young people, and this is not a good way to go.”
- The way they work together is impressive, it is an easy process.
- So many people have been reached for this one-stop-shop. Young people move from one service to another.
- “It makes sense. This is how it should be.”
- We were impressed by the diversity of actors working together. The Café QJ was a great place for outside people to come and visit/support the building as well.
- The system of governance to run the Quartier Jeunes is interesting.
- “The most I learned was from the lady who did the same thing as me. I learned about my way of working and how my organisation works.”
- “Our obstacle is competitiveness. It is the funding model that we have that is driving us apart and away from each other.”

What happened after the visit?

Before going to Paris, France, one of the intended outcomes of the All-Island delegation was to host some kind of events to share the findings with all those receptive to such a topic, be it colleagues from the youth services networks but also with our own elected representatives.

It is with this in mind that the youth organisations planned for an event to take place in their respective cities- Derry-Londonderry and Galway –where all would be invited, as well as young people, and members of the general public who may be interested on this topic. All well-wishers of the present and the future of young people would be welcomed in this conversation.

Both cities have strong youth services supported by their local institutions, and already hosted or participated in conversations, discussions, and negotiations around the idea of a central place for young people where their needs could be met. This conversation about the Youth HQ was just adding one more conversation to their efforts already underway.



Visit to the Quartier Jeunes, Paris, France, December 2022

QJ CETTE SEMAINE À QJ
DU 05 AU 10 DÉCEMBRE

LUNDI 05 DÉCEMBRE

- Boostez votre entretien**
Développez votre confiance en vous. 09h30-12h30
- Valorisez votre image professionnelle**
Maîtrisez l'image que vous renvoyez aux autres. 14h-17h

MARDI 06 DÉCEMBRE

- Dépassez son plafond de verre**
Atelier 100% féminin 14h-18h

MERCREDI 07 DÉCEMBRE

- Atelier « Accro à Cran »**
Tabac, alcool, cannabis, écrans. Parlons-en! 14h-18h
- Love, sexe & fun**
Atelier d'information, d'écoute et de conseil 14h-16h
- Atelier**
Trouvez un emploi ou un stage au Québec 14h30-16h30

Journée des Universités
Venez rencontrer des représentantes et étudiants.es ambassadeur.riennes des universités 10h-17h. Sur inscriptions*

JEUDI 08 DÉCEMBRE

- Atelier d'art-thérapie**
Faites une pause autour d'un atelier de photocollage 14h-18h

VENREDI 09 DÉCEMBRE

- Réussissez votre projet**
Identifiez vos compétences et augmentez votre estime de soi 09h30-12h30

SAMEDI 10 DÉCEMBRE

- Ateliers de découverte:**
 - Les études d'architecture en île de France 10h30
 - Intégrez une école de commerce 13h
 - Intégrez une école d'ingénieur 15h

@QJParis
www.qj.paris.fr



Café QJ

RAMEN

- Vegetarien → 10€**
Bouillon de légumes, nouilles, chou chinois, carottes, champignons, poivrons de saison, œuf mollet, lard, coriandre & graines de lin.
- Beuf → 12€**
Bouillon de légumes, fond de boeuf, nouilles, chou chinois, carottes, champignons, poivrons de saison, œuf mollet, Fromage râlé, coriandre & graines de lin.
- Porc → 12€**
Bouillon de légumes, fond de boeuf, nouilles, chou chinois, carottes, champignons, poivrons de saison, œuf mollet, lard fumé, sauce soja & graines de lin.
- Combo → 14€**
Bouillon de légumes, fond de boeuf, nouilles, chou chinois, carottes, champignons, poivrons de saison, œuf mollet, lard fumé, Fromage râlé, coriandre & graines de lin.

MAXI BURGERS

Quatre ingrédients au minimum ou six (à volonté) dans le burger. Nos burgers sont toujours accompagnés de pickles au vinaigre et de chips.

- Le Classique → 10€**
Burger maison, steak de poulet beef, cheddar, sauce maison, tomate, salade, pickles de concombre.
- Le Bon vivant → 14€**
Burger maison, steak de poulet beef, tomate de Savoie, lard, sauce maison, pickles, tomate, salade.
- Le Chili burger → 14€**
Burger maison, steak de poulet beef au cumin, cheddar, sauce maison, pickles, tomate, salade.
- L'Euzko burger → 14€**
Burger maison, steak de poulet beef au piment d'Espelette, fromage de brebis baroque, lard, poivron, pickles, tomate, salade.

Visit to the Quartier Jeunes, Paris, France, December 2022



Visit to the Quartier Jeunes, Paris, France, December 2022

4. A thought-provoking event in Derry-Londonderry, Northern Ireland.

**“YOUTH HQ” IN DERRY/LONDONDERRY,
IMPOSSIBLE OR INEVITABLE?**

THURSDAY 4 MAY 2023

**from 09:30 to 12:30, at The Maldron Hotel, Butcher Street, in
Derry/Londonderry,**

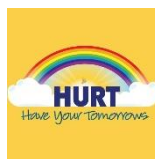
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Every day, our world is becoming more complex, and many young people are struggling because of it. Their well-being is the well-being of all, and their discomfort is the discomfort of all. How can we ensure then that young people are equipped with tools that will empower them in such challenging times in a simple, straightforward, and effective way? How can we continue to empower our young people to become active agents of change not just in their own lives but in the city, they live also?

An All-Island delegation, including four organisations from Derry-Londonderry - Hurt, Netlove, Reach Across, and Youth Action NI – and one organisation from Galway – Youth Work Ireland Galway - visited the “Youth HQ” (Quartier Jeunes) in Paris, France in December 2022. Each organisation was inspired and impressed with all the support provided by a wide range of actors for a great number of young people to access the services, the support and the care and much more... under one roof!

If you are interested to know more about it and explore together what it would look like to have a “Youth HQ” in Derry/Londonderry, please join the conversation on May 4th, especially if you are a local organisation, elected representative, civil servant, business owner, local charity, health/ youth workers, a hopeful citizen and most importantly, if you are a young person (16+). RSVP needed.

All are welcome to take part in this discussion for the material, social, intellectual and mental well-being of the young people of our city.



co-hosting with

RSVP here: <https://bit.ly/3Gx9Xjq>

AGENDA

Thursday 4 May 2023

**From 09:30 to 12:30 at the Maldron Hotel,
Butcher Street, Derry/Londonderry-**

09:30 to 10:00: Tea | Coffee | Breakfast Baps & Rolls

10:00 to 11:00: Welcome | Purpose | HQ Visit Report | D/L

11:00 to 11:15: Break

11:15 to 12:15: Consultation/Roundtable

12:15 to 12:30: Next steps

To ensure that all can attend this conversation, space is limited up to 2 guests per organisation including one young person per organisation.

RSVP HERE: <https://bit.ly/3Gx9Xjq>

For more information: Netlove.Original@gmail.com

Summary

The event called “**Youth HQ in Derry-Londonderry: impossible or inevitable?**” was held on May 4th 2023 at the Maldron Hotel in Derry-Londonderry by the four organisations from the Northern Ireland who visited the Youth HQ all located in Derry-Londonderry - [Hurt](#), [NETLOVE](#), [Reach Across](#), and [Youth Action NI](#).

The purpose of this “conversation” was twofold: first, to share about the learnings from the visit that occurred in Paris, France few months prior and what the Model QJ is; second, to explore with the participants if they thought this could be a possibility in the city, we live in.

Surprisingly, it was well-attended: participants from across the region and across the border came: 40 to 50 people from across the region of Northern Ireland, mostly from Derry-Londonderry including civil servants from the Donegal County Council (Youth Council) and the Derry City and Strabane District Council. Young people and adults from various sectors, few elected representatives, members of the general public and public services alike, members of youth, mental health, disability, girls scout, women and employment organisations also participated. In sum, there was a diversity of ages, backgrounds, line of works, and locations represented.

Welcomed and registered by young people, attendees had the opportunity to listen to presentations and to participate to consultations by interacting with one another for nearly three hours: a short video was shared about the visit, some opening words, and a PowerPoint presentation where each member organisation shared about their work in the city, some elements of the Model QJ and what they had learned from their visit. The members from Youth Work Ireland Galway didn't make it unfortunately, but they did share their insights too. In addition to this, few young people were asked to share why they thought it would be valuable to have such a facility in the city.

“A collaborative approach seems to be the way to move forward!”

(From a member of the All-Island delegation who visited the QJ in Paris, France)

“Since I was 12, I wished there was somewhere to meet different people from different countries and religions to just sit together and be friends, chatting about different things (...) We can't change someone's thoughts, but we can accept it because we need peace. (...) We, as young people need a place like that. I really like it and I support it.”

(From a 17-year-old participant who shared her thoughts about the Youth HQ)

In light of the context we live in, participants were inspired by the words of John Lennon **“You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one. I hope someday you’ll join us, And the world will live as one.”**⁷ The political landscape, the challenges youth organisations are facing with funding through the means of competition, the feuds between the elected representatives and other actors in our society, the absence of a functioning government in Northern Ireland - to say the least - are all obstacles which can make it difficult and challenging for the implementation of a Youth HQ in the city of Derry-Londonderry.

During this event, however, everyone knew the reality they were living in, but stressed upon the point that we must be dreamers, that we must very well start somewhere, somehow, at some point, and that the time is possibly now.

Participants also remembered that to develop a **“Cathedral Thinking”** is timely for the work ahead which can be defined as the concept of long-term projects or goals that must be realised for the sake of future generations. The architect, the worker, sometimes generations of workers, never got to see a cathedral fully completed, and yet, they believed in it, they worked hard for it, and we are the generations now that can admire it. This thinking is directly linked to the kind of legacy one wishes to offer the next generations to come. To see the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, this all can strive to do - together.

Finally, **the purpose of this event was not to convince participants to have a Youth HQ** - nor that the QJ Model is the best- but rather to explore together that such a concept, should we embrace it - may take time depending on the level of understanding and cooperation between the various decision-makers and contributors within a locality, a city, or a region. The outcomes of this event are encapsulated in the answers of our participants to the five questions they were asked around the room. Each table was invited to go around, to ponder on the questions and to reflect on what it means for the region.

The event was sponsored by [North West Youth Services](#) who spoke about the brilliant work they also do in Derry-Londonderry and the region.

⁷ “Imagine” by John Lennon



“YOUTH HQ in Derry-Londonderry: impossible or inevitable?” May 2023

5. Outcomes

For the last part of the event, the room was divided into 5 main areas with five questions for the participants to reflect on together:

1/What would you like to see within a Youth HQ in our city? (Derry-Londonderry)

2/Why do you think we need a Youth HQ in our city? What are the benefits?

3/What steps do you think we can take to move this idea forward?

4/What are some of the creative ways that we can secure resources | funding wise to make this possible?

5/What obstacles | challenges do you foresee occurring?

➤ **Additional question asked after the event (optional):**

6/Can you contribute to making the Youth HQ happen? Any other suggestions?

1/ What would you like to see within a Youth HQ in our city?

- “Youth Space” | “Debates Clubs” | “Deliberative Democracy” | “Youth Panel”
- “Accessible forums for discussion (digital and in person)” | “Digital zone”
- “Creativity Hub: Arts & Crafts” | “Arts” | “Arts activities”
- “Law” | “Legal services”
- “Housing Advice”
- “Life Skills”
- “Food Bank”
- “Adult Advisory Services”
- “Crisis Team” | “Harm Reduction” |
- “Education”
- “Training courses” | “Work Experience Opportunities” | “Employment”
- “Interculturalism | Inclusion”
- “Smiling faces” | “Chill zone”.
- “Spiritual club” | “Gym”
- “Childcare support” | “Parenthood planning” | “Parent courses” | “Crèche for young children 8 weeks to 4 years”
- “Links to other youth services”
- “Opportunity to get into nature” | “Outside space” | “Horticulture” | “Allotments” | “Permaculture”.
- “Spread the word- Cathedral vision”.
- “Kitchen Cooking” | “Music studio + Stage”
- “Café” | “Social enterprise”
- “More youth workers” | “Business Employers”
- “Signposting for third level education”
- “National + International Cross Community relations”
- “Health professionals- Nurses-Doctors” | “Pharmacy” | “Health visitors” | “Health + Sports” | “Mental Health” |
- “Transport (free?) – Easy access to city and other towns”
- “Addiction services” | “Counsellors services”
- “How do we get young people in?”
- “Fun space” | “Music” | “Gaming” | “Adventure”
- “Statistic services”
- “DV DatMyViolence | Sexual Violence support”

2/Why do you think we need a Youth HQ in our city? What are the benefits?

- “A central hub where young people can access ALL services”.
- “Support young people ability to overcome barriers of engagement”.
- “Create better working relationships and barriers within different services | organisations”.
- “Prevents isolation, provides facilitated social connection”.
- “Job opportunities”
- “Youth contribution | Participation in Decision-Making”
- “Vision – Hope for our young people” | “Leadership”
- “A - wild goose chase – in the process of accessing resources, discourages and ostracises the most marginalised groups. A – one stop shop – improves this.”
- “Showcase and celebrate the contribution of our youth in society”.
- “Places responsibility and accountability on our youth, improving and enhancing the skill set”.
- “Role models from their communities”
- “Helping financial issues e.g., the cost of living”.
- “One-stop-shop closing the gap to access”.
- “Removes the lengthy waiting times for access to services”.
- “Reduce Stigma” | “Reduce waiting time”.
- “Lift their expectations/confidence” | “Understanding community”.
- “Lower rates of self-harm”
- “Addiction problems |mental health | finding your place| lack of physical contact during COVID | current provision = cannot deal with it”
- “Save lives |reduce addiction | independence”.
- “The problem: lack of services, money and cope”
- “Meeting other young people” | “Not boxed in”.
- “Poverty”
- “Promised futures” | “Shared learning”.
- “Jobs-> upskilling in jobs for the future |empowerment | self-helped”

3/What steps do you think we can take to move this idea forward?

- “Consult with young people – what would they like?”
- “Develop a strategy with businesspeople”.
- “Build alliances”
- “Seek funding”
- “Start a campaign”
- “Start a youth committee/youth forum”.
- “Online petitions – go fund me – just giving”.
- “Name change structure” | “Name the project”.
- “Open”
- “Convince”.
- “Involve politicians/community leaders/schools/colleges/universities”.
- “A protest/rally”
- “Research similar ideas/projects” | “Research and secure potential premises”
- “Dialogue”
- “Start process early. Work in collaboration without one centre first. (signpost)”
- “Backing from a celebrity (Lisa McGee, B. Gallagher)”
- “Key people for initial steering group”
- “Presentation to the Council”
- “Councillors as a champion for the programme”

4/What are some of the creative ways that we can secure resources | funding wise to make this possible?

- “Cross Border/Shared Island” | “Peace Plus” | “Joint funding Peace Plus” | “SEUPB”
- “Government”
- “Charitable Status for the building”
- “Partnership approach”
- “Promotion of the project”
- “Young People lobbying”
- “Working together, pull resources”.
- “Supporting Communities LTA (Ballymena)”
- “Locate Organisations in that building”.
- “Employer Sponsorship”
- “Big lottery”
- “DCSDC”
- “International fund for Ireland”
- “London Guilds”
- “Philanthropy Private Funders”
- “Corporate Support”
- “Youth workers to involve young people”.
- “Crowd funding”
- “Citizen’s involvement campaign”
- “First - Vision; Then - A good idea will always attract funding”.
- “Colour Run | Sponsored walks | Quiz Nights | Bingo”
- “Establish common purpose (Multi Agency)”
- “Podcasts | “Roadshows” | “Develop e-zine”.
- “Create social enterprise for young people to create products to sell”.

5/What obstacles | challenges do you foresee occurring?

- “Could it become a risk to local existing hubs?”
- “Conflict of locations” | “Areas of HQ” | “It must be safe!”
- “Operational Costs” | “Funding” | “Sustainability”
- “Not having a common agenda” | “Finding neutral grounds”.
- “Non-operational Government”
- “Ensuring no exclusivity”.
- “Funding for current youth groups!”
- “What services do you include?”
- “What makes it unique?”
- “Conflict of interest” = complex administration “Co-Operation is needed + equal approaches”.
- “Extended “talk” of the projection – ACTION!”
- “Accessibility | Youth mobility”
- “Fear for potential social repercussion for young person and organisations become sustainable.”
- “Competing funds”
- “Statutory Buy-In a must!”
- “Finding neutral ground”.
- “Need to create permanency”.
- “Referred, referee agencies?”
- “Start Small”

➤ **Additional question asked after the event (optional):**

6/How can you contribute to making the Youth HQ happen? Any other suggestions?

- “I would like to explore ways of contributing through youth led art programmes possibly?” | “Great speakers today! Inspirational!”
- “YES. We would like to help support young parents and offer women only space and support integration. On site childcare is vital and we have expertise on having onsite crèche for children 8 weeks to 4 years”.
- “Yes! Thank you”
- “Yes”
- “Not too sure”
- “Yes. As a CEO of Youth Action, I also play a strategic role in transforming the voluntary youth sector. We have also developed a youth café this year where young people are trained in Barista and Food Hygiene. There have also been developments 10 plus years ago on Youth HQ called “the door” project.” | “Thank you and I would be very keen to meet up”.
- “Yes. Can contribute ideas, experience, and participate in conversation.” | “A very good event and good start for a bigger dream”
- “Yes. Push as a YP to what we need”.
- “Some teams within DHC may be able to help”.
- “Experience in Volunteering/ Organisations/ Fundraising” | “First- the clear/supporters/vision, then – the funding will be attracted”.
- “Organisation and Disability”
- “Yes. Based in Donegal but would be interested in seeing this become a NW Regional Service with satellite spaces.”
- “Yes. Would be helpful to involve input from local businesspeople, radio, chamber of commerce, medical professionals, etc.”
- “I would hope so”.
- “Yes. Involve business and corporate organisations”.
- “Yes” | “I thought it was a great event. Thank you 😊!”
- “Yes. Organise fundraisers + Do security at events”.
- “Yes. Pushing this as a youth worker to collaborate YQ happen.”
- “Yes. Organise fundraised + do security at events”.
- “Yes. Fundraise + keep pushing this as a young person”.



“YOUTH HQ in Derry-Londonderry: impossible or inevitable?” May 2023

6. Next Steps

A lot has happened since December 2022, and a lot has been reflected upon and suggested. More needs to be done. What will happen next though, does not follow any predetermined course...

At this moment, youth organisations who visited the QJ in Paris, France, and their partners, are exploring what it would take to have such a Youth HQ in their own locality (or region).

Youth Work Ireland Galway in Galway City, in the Republic of Ireland, is exploring this with the support of academia, their City Council and youth organisations. Youth organisations in the City of Derry-Londonderry, complex in its nature and in such an uncertain political landscape, are struggling with funding cuts sometimes – most of the times – unjustified in Northern Ireland but the will is strong and from the event, one can see, they are determined to make it happen.

So... what's next?

The suggestions offered during the event hosted on May 4th, 2023, are a good start. One thing which is certain is that **no one can underestimate the power of consultation**, one that welcomes the diversity and the clashes of opinions for one common purpose: to reach a common shared understanding about the Youth HQ and a clarity of mind and heart about the next steps to take together, in **a unified vision**.

How to reach this unity then? **It is both a goal and a mode of operation**. To host more conversations, with more partners, with more young people, and with the participation of key stakeholders such as the governmental institutions, the businesses, and possibly, schools/colleges, and universities, parents, and students is crucial of course. Only then, short/long term solutions can be found, refined over time.

To see ourselves as collaborators and not as competitors is paramount for such a mighty task. We have been raised from a very young age to compete and to discredit others. Some political and financial systems are based upon competition, dishonesty, greed, and corruption. It won't be easy, but Paris is doing it, so why can't we?

An African proverb says that **"it takes a village to raise a child"**. Another one says that **"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"**. Whatever one decides to do, "to go together", is the "how". Consultation is a means which allows us to reach this unity founded on an environment that is open, free from criticism, free from manipulation, dedicated to this process of learning, without shying away from pitfalls and yet rejoicing in the victories and learning one gains and accomplishes.

7. Conclusion

“Be the Arrow, Not the Target”

Young people are the arrows, not the targets. We, the different active agents of one shared society - be it elected representatives, members of governmental institutions, youth, health, police, employment and mental health organisations, schools, colleges, universities, teachers, businesses, and other kind of services or actors - are like the shaft or the wind that will help this arrow to go far. It's just the way it is. Every new generation learn from and is supported by the previous one. Every new generation takes human society towards a new direction. **History is the witness that testifies to this truth.** There is no doubt about it then...

We must unite our efforts for the well-being of our young people.

And this could very well be to unite for this Youth HQ to become a reality. It starts by creating spaces, safe and open to all, where consultations can take place respectfully, but not without the clashes of opinions, with one common goal: truth. **The young people are the citizens of today but those who will make and take the decisions of tomorrow.** They deserve our time, space, and energy and to be consulted with too, so we find truth about the best way to move forward, together.

It is crucial that, the same way the QJ of Paris was born 9 months after the announcement of the Mayor of Paris to build a “House for Youth” serving all the young people of Paris and the region, in the middle of the Pandemic with the involvement of all, we, too, must unite our thoughts, our words and our actions to make this work. **Trust, therefore, and acceptance are also key ingredients to make this happen.**

Each locality, each region, each country, could if they wanted it, have such a place so each young person feels welcome and free to use any kind of services in relation to their physical, mental, legal, social, intellectual well-being in a safe environment. **A place where they can learn how to become empowered and active citizen,** by receiving information about the services they are entitled to and through a close accompaniment by specialised professionals, mediators, animators, teachers, and their own peers, and prosper in all the areas of their lives.

A place where young people feel welcomed and appreciated, free from prejudice, judgment, and discrimination. A place that is not dismissive of their hopes, dreams, but rather, reminding them how unique they each are, and encouraging them to become the best version of themselves while addressing their fears and doubts in a kind, compassionate and patient way. This is the kind of Youth HQ we want to have on the island of Ireland because investing in the young people today, is building a safe, equitable and peaceful society for tomorrow.

Who's in?

8. A special thank you...

To the Municipality of Paris for receiving us and all the generous information shared! Merci infiniment à Mr. Thomas Rogé, Madame Bettina Manchel, Mr. Aurélien Lesné, mais aussi à Mr. Ariel Weil pour sa précieuse aide sur Twitter, ainsi qu'à Madame Anne Hidalgo pour son idée de génie.

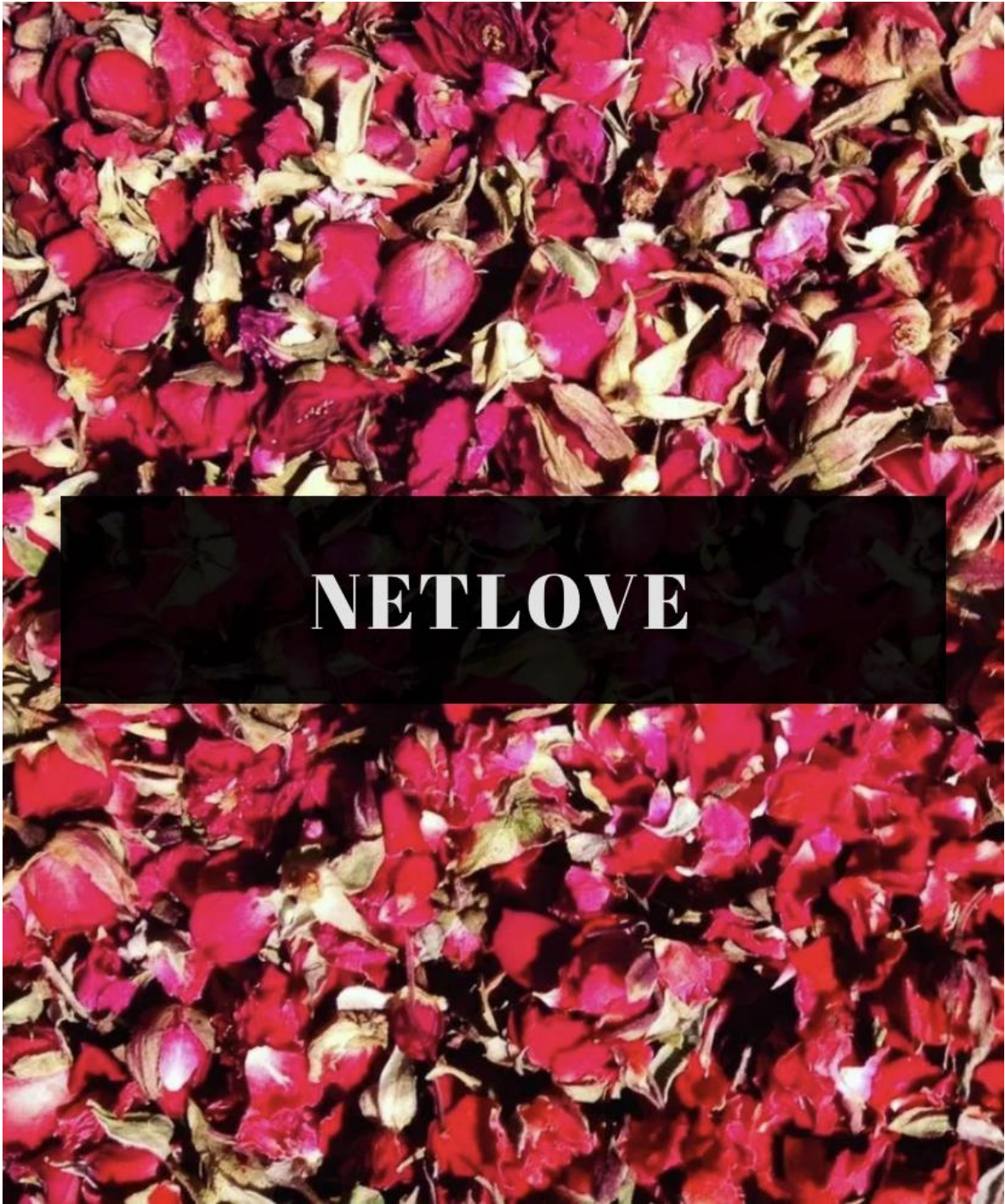
To Hurt, Youth Action NI, Reach Across and Youth Work Ireland Galway for their support and their involvement in the first ever trip to the QJ! This visit was epic. Hopefully, one similar event will take place in Galway in the next few months and hopefully, the young people of Northern Ireland will be given the attention, funding and care they deserve.

To the members of civil society - especially to **North West Youth Services** for their support - public services, members of the general public, and elected representatives, who attended the event on May 4th, 2023, and contributed their time, energy and resources to making it a successful one.

To the elected representatives, who, despite their scepticism and busy schedules, still met, listened, and engaged with NETLOVE about the Youth HQ.

To friends, family and colleagues who believe in this initiative (as well as NETLOVE) and its impact on the hearts and minds of the people to build more unity, more compassion, more peace, and more love between the members of one shared society.

To the young people of the island of Ireland, of France, and of anywhere around the world for without whom **NETLOVE** would not be. We believe in you, we support you and we will love you, always.



“Love is the most powerful weapon which you can use to transform the human heart.”

[NETLOVE](#) is a consultancy agency promoting the values of Diversity, Equality, Inclusion, Justice, and Peace. It creates meaningful and safe spaces for children, young people, and adults to explore these themes. It focuses energies on how to make our world a better place for the prosperity and the well-being of all. The founder of NETLOVE is Carmel Irandoust.



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