Nuffield Review: *Detached Youth Work and Democratic Education.*

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Introduction.

The Nuffield Review of 14-19 education and training[1] poses many important questions. These are of as much concern to informal and community educators as they are to those in the formal sector. 'Youth work' is the most common and recognisable descriptor.

The Review has already recognised the value of diversity in provision in meeting the needs of young people. However, it acknowledges that: '…the use of voluntary bodies and the Youth Service, whose expertise and different ways of relating to young people are too rarely understood and used'[2]. This paper sets out to support a better understanding of the contribution youth work can make to young people's education and, particularly, education for democracy. It will consider, specifically, *detached* youth work and its role in creating opportunities for democratic education. Beyond that, it aims to stimulate a wider debate about the relationship between education and democracy more generally.

Starting from real lives.

The image of a group on a street corner might not come readily to mind when thinking about education. But, this group, typically comprising a couple of adults and an assorted group of young people, offers the opportunity for important insights. This is detached youth work in action. So, what of this group; what is happening and what is this thing called 'detached youth work'?

Here we have a practice based on the principle that it works 'on and from young people's territory (as determined by their definitions of space, needs, interests, concerns and lifestyles)'[3]. Unlike centre-based youth work, it has a geographical focus: 'detached youth workers work where young people have chosen to be, whether this be streets, cafés, shopping centres etc.'[4]. As for supporting learning, it 'endeavours to provide a broad-based, open-ended, social education in which the problems and issues to be dealt with, and the manner in which they are dealt with, emerge from dialogue between the young person and the youth worker'[5].

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[1] The Nuffield Review is an independent review of all aspects of 14–19 education and training. It has been funded for six years by the Nuffield Foundation and began in October 2003.

[2] The Nuffield Review of 14–19 Education & Training Annual Report, 2005–06.

[3] Federation for Detached Youth Work (2007) *Detached Youth Work Guidelines*, Leicester: Federation for Detached Youth Work, p. 11.

[4] op cit.

[5] Crimmens, D., Factor, F., Jeffs, T., Pitts, J., Pugh, C., Spence, J. and Turner, P. (2004) *Reaching socially excluded young people: A national study of street-based youth work*, Leicester: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

These dialogical underpinnings have much to do with detached youth work's earliest history; they resonate still. The work of T.H. Tarlton of the then newly formed YMCA[6] aimed to contact young men who wanted help in forming associations and 'making himself generally useful among the class to which his efforts will be developed'[7]. This early emphasis on helping young people *in terms significantly defined by them* laid the foundations for detached youth work's democratic orientation. It is significant also that later efforts to engage young people in street-based settings were *not* specifically made in the name of young people's education. Work undertaken by researchers in New York by the Welfare Council[8] sought only to understand the nature of teenage gangs. Despite the wider context of fears about delinquency (one that endures to this day), young people said that being asked questions about their lives had enabled them to better understand the cultural influences that affected them and their aspirations. Clearly then, engaging with the real lives of young people was, and continues to be, a powerful medium for learning.

Engagement as the basis of social inclusion.

That those contacted in these earlier days have similar characteristics to today's, so-called, NEET[9] generation should be a reminder of the enduring problems faced by many young people, albeit not exclusively, living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods - and of the importance of social inclusion as an aim of education. The Review's concern for the 'many young people who remain disengaged, joining the ranks of the untrained – whether in or out of work' is the focus of its Engaging Youth Enquiry[10]. And it is to this point about *engagement* that detached youth work speaks so powerfully. It values voluntary association and believes that young people should be creators not consumers[11] of their youth service experience. This means they are encouraged to take control of both the form and function of the projects to which they are attached. This implies also that 'where they don't like it, they can change it'. It is a transformative agenda that echoes beyond their immediate experience; they are encouraged to think about and act upon the circumstances that give rise to problems, rather than merely learning to cope with them.

Young people's choice to be involved in their leisure time is respected. It is recognised as symbolic of *their* motivation and *their* agency. Youth workers see this as foundational to young people learning to take ever-increasing responsibility for their own lives as they progress toward adulthood; autonomy is valued. That this

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[6] In 1844.

[7] Shedd, C.P. (1955) *History of the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations,* London: SPCK.

[8] Reported by Crawford, P., Malamud, D. and Dumpson, J. (1950) *Working with Teenage Gangs,* New York: Welfare Council of New York.

[9] Not in Education, Employment and Training.

[10] Engaging Youth Enquiry. *New Approaches to Engaging Youth: Understanding the problems and implementing the solutions.* Briefing Paper, September 2007. The Nuffield Review.

[11] Smith, M. (1982) *Creators not Consumers. Rediscovering Social Education* (2nd edn.), Leicester: National Association of Youth Clubs.

emerges through the social practice of autonomy[12] is why experiential learning and democratic process are the primary pedagogies of youth work and informal education. Fundamentally also, this, leisure-time, context demands that learning should be as much for today as for tomorrow. That this is an important counter-balance to a schooling system predicated on (some would say obsessed by) preparation for an adult life defined increasingly by 'economic well-being', cannot be understated. Likewise, youth work's emphasis on the development of the whole person appears increasingly pertinent in an era where 'qualification' seems of greater value than 'education'.

That young people can, conversely, choose to *disassociate* is also seen as worthy of celebration. Accordingly, detached youth workers are, in particular, mindful always of issues of power, authority and control; unless they are *engaging*, young people's *engagement* will rarely occur – in a street-based setting, young people can, and will, simply walk away. That youth workers in France go by the name *animateur* speaks for itself. In sum, informal and community educators will always try to 'educate with the minimum of power'; they recognise authoritarianism as a barrier to engagement and deleterious to their aim of nurturing young people's autonomy. And yet they go further; they encourage young people to 'talk back to authority'[13], believing this to be intrinsic to critical thinking.

Does this speak to education in compulsory settings? Perhaps. Walking away is, at least theoretically, not possible. And yet, many young people truant; and others again are present but not engaged. This belies the suggestion that learning is a corollary of attendance. The latter can usefully be described as the 'invisibly disaffected', thereby drawing attention to an often overlooked phenomenon. That they do not react as those with 'behaviour problems' is likely testament to more effective familial socialisation; they display few, if any, of the outward – visible - signs of disengagement from learning. They are a group who, as the Review points out, may well 'succeed' but for which 'there is disquiet about the quality of learning, and about the range and richness of experience they receive'[14]. A commitment to providing an open-access service means that youth workers often also work with this group of young people. They see young people's involvement in a mixed, 'comprehensive', group as beneficial for all. To avoid stigmatisation, they defend 'targeting through genericism'[15], even in the face of the clamour for resources to be directed at the 'most needy'.

Relationships with the formal sector.

[12] Tiffany, G.A. (1994) *Autonomy as a social practice*, unpublished; based on a re-working of Paul Hirst's conceptualisation of *Social Practices*: See Hirst, P. H. *Liberal Education and the Nature or Knowledge* in Peters, R.S. (ed.) *The Philosophy of Education*, London: Oxford University Press.

[13] The idea of "talking back" to authority is credited to the writer bell in Christensen, L. & Karp, S. (eds.) (2003) *Rethinking School Reform: Views from the Classroom,* Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

[14] Pring, R. (2006) *Curriculum for the 21st century. The need to develop a deeper national debate*, The Nuffield Review.

[15] Tiffany, G. A. (2007) *Reconnecting Detached Youth Work: Guidelines and Standards for Excellence,* Leicester: Federation for Detached Youth Work, p. 22.

It's worth exploring further the relationship between the informal and formal sector.

That youth workers are increasingly drawn into school can be seen as a mixed blessing[16]. On the one-hand, there is recognition that the *way* they work has the capacity to engage young people, especially those disaffected from the mainstream curriculum. But, on the other, there is a concern that they are being co-opted into delivering pre-scribed material that the school has struggled to teach or, more pertinently, *pupils* they have struggled to teach. Therein the rub. The very processes that enable youth workers to engage young people, namely, dialogue and negotiation, are subverted to teach a 'curriculum' or aim at behaviour management. Euphemistically, these in-school activities of youth workers often go under the banner of the 'alternative curriculum'. But this is still a pre-determined 'course to be run'[17]. Whilst youth workers' knowledge of informal methodologies often enliven these courses, this is, invariably at the expense of informal *education*. Ultimately, then, the basis of their practice is changed[18]; they come adrift from that defining feature of their work, that it is conversation-based.

The role of conversation.

Conversation has been an enduring theme not just in informal and community education but within a wider philosophy of education. Links are also commonly made between conversation and education for democracy. Oakeshott's view that education is both an engagement between teacher and learner[19] and an initiation into the 'conversation between the generations of mankind'[20] is pertinent on both counts. And yet, informal education sees itself more as *democratic education* rather than education *for* democracy. Informal and community educators criticise the latter for the assumption that - by the end of it - students will, somehow magically, be transformed into democratic citizens. Their preference is much more for learning democratic virtues through the *experience* and *practice* of democracy. It should be no surprise that many are disposed to the work of John Dewey and that they recognise, also, the general antipathy toward this way of working:

> The objection most commonly brought against the type of free social discussion here recommended is that it becomes aimless, and gets nowhere, that discussion is dispersive, children jumping from one thing to another, till unity is destroyed and pupils are left with a sense of futility. There is no doubt

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[16] Shepperd, J. (2008) *Park Life,* Education Guardian, 19th February, 2008.
http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,,2257719,00.html

[17] Curriculum is derived from the Latin *currere*, literally, a course.

[18] See *Detached Youth Workers or Detached Teachers?* in Tiffany, G. A. (2007) *Reconnecting Detached Youth Work: Guidelines and Standards for Excellence,* Leicester: Federation for Detached Youth Work, pp. 25–29.

[19] Oakeshott, M. (1972) *Education: The Engagement and its Frustration,* in Dearden, R.F.., Hirst, P.H., and Peters, R.S. (eds.) *Education and the Development of Reason,* London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.

[20] Oakeshott, M. (1962) *The voice of poetry in the conversation of mankind,* Rationalism in Politics, London: Methuen.

of the reality of the danger thus suggested. But if the young are to be prepared when they leave school to take an effective part in a democratic society, the danger must be faced and conquered. Many of the failures of democratic government (which are used by critics to condemn the whole undertaking) are due to the fact that adults are unable to share in joint conference and consultation on social questions and issues. They can neither contribute intelligently, nor can they follow and judge the contributions of others. The habits set up in their earlier schooling have not fitted them for this enterprise; the habits even stand in the way[21].

So, how far have we travelled in the generations since Dewey argued in favour of a more democratic education? Two themes are worth pursing; the first the social aspects of education, the second, the participative dimensions.

Social education, as local and community-based.

We saw earlier that youth work emphasises social education[22]. It draws upon theories of humanistic psychology in favouring group work and collaborative learning methodologies: 'These groups are obvious sites of interaction and within them a sense of connectedness or community can be fostered'[23]. Beyond this, these groups are ascribed further significance: 'they are a 'laboratory of democracy, a place where people may have the experience of learning to live co-operatively'[24]. And, they act as vehicles for the promotion of 'associational life' where: 'these associations are not just the cement of civil society, they hold the possibility of being the primary means of organizing social life'[25]. This orientation suggests forcefully that theories of informal education have a role to play in informing education for democracy.

The social orientation of the work has further characteristics. It sees relationships as the medium for learning[26]. Conviviality[27] is all-important. And community is its backdrop, with its diversity of Local[28] dimensions. All of this can be contrasted with the 'national' orientation of a state curriculum which now preaches 'personalisation' as if, somehow, *this* values the local.

But what of that second theme, participation; does it offer greater hope for a democratic education?

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[21] Dewey, J. (1933) *How We Think,* New York: Heath, pp. 270–71.

[22] See footnote 5 above.

[23] Smith, M.K. (1994) *Local Education: community, conversation, praxis,* Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 111.

[24] Knowles, M.S. (1950) *Informal Adult Education,* New York: Association Press, p. 9.

[25] Hirst, P. (1993) *Associational Democracy* in D. Held (ed.) *Prospects for Democracy: North, South, East, West,* Cambridge: Polity, p. 117.

[26] Tiffany, G. (2001) *Relationships and Learning*, in Deer Richardson, L. and Wolfe, M. (eds.) *Principles and Practice of Informal Education,* London: Routledge Falmer.

[27] Illich, I. (1973) *Tools for Conviviality,* New York: Harper and Row.

[28] As footnote 25.

Participation.

Certainly the wider narrative of *participation* has moved apace. But to what extent has it become tangible, in practice?

Participation has long since been a feature of youth work[29]. It now extends, at least in theory, to schooling with a good deal talked about 'pupil voice', school councils and the like. It is perhaps no surprise then that youth workers are often invited to facilitate classes in citizenship education. The significance of this apparent commitment to the 'voice of the learner' has been highlighted in the Review, but concern exists about the extent to which it has become embedded in mainstream education: 'More radical, however, is the example of the voice of the young person becoming a central component of the curriculum – not just an aid to the learning of someone's else's curriculum'[30].

Is this possible? At home, we might look toward a myriad of highly participative youth and community projects. They engage young people in a variety of ways, through open-access and course-based provision. Importantly, the latter tends to happen as a product of the first; earlier informal contact, coupled with the encouragement of workers, supports continued learning and personal and social development.

Elsewhere, Progressive schools like Summerhill[31], despite pariah status just a generation ago, now receive widespread recognition of the educational value of working in a democratic way. Overseas, radical experiments in democratic education are now advanced, embedded and celebrated by local communities[32]. Significantly, in these, the curriculum *is* informed by the voices of young people *and* the wider

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[29] HMSO (1982) *Experience and Participation. Report of the Review Group on the Youth Service in England* (The Thompson Report), London: HMSO.

[30] The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education & Training Annual Report, 2005-06. p. 210.

[31] Zoe Redhead, Summerhill's head teacher says: "There is a growing movement towards child-participatory types of education. Their words pave the way for others to copy our model. It's a recognition that it works. On the other hand, just as you think education is getting more humanised, a government minister will say it's all about 'performance, performance, performance'. I'll always view them with deep suspicion." The Guardian, 1st December, 2007: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/dec/01/ofsted.schools

[32] Apple, M.W. and Gandin, L.A. (2002) *Challenging neo-liberalism, building democracy: creating the Citizen School in Porto Alegre. Brazil*, Journal of Educational Policy, 2002, Vol. 17, No. 2, 259-279.

community and adopts a critical stance toward multiculturalism[33]. These schools are, to many, symbolic of the democratic 'Common School'[34].

Challenges and constraints to democratic practice.

The picture thus portrayed, as might be anticipated, is complex, particularly as there are many challenges and constraints to its further implementation. Indeed, youth work has been subject to a range of demands in recent years, many of which have significantly affected its form and function. Perhaps reasonably, the tensions that have emerged as a result of an internal dialogue about whether it is and/or should be leisure or education oriented, have (given the relative success of those claiming the latter) led to it being judged on similar terms to formal education. It is somewhat ironic then that as schooling appears to increasingly embrace the value and values of informal and community education, youth work is now visited on by its own plethora of targets, outcomes and performance indicators. That these bureaucratic mechanisms are a cause of anxiety across mainstream education only adds to the mix[35].

Youth workers now have to work to a youth work curriculum[36], achieve specified contact and participation rates, and provide evidence of young people's progression toward, and achievement of, accredited outcomes. As a result, the work is becoming more programme-led. This represents a shift from the historical position of young people creating 'youth work'[37] to one in which they choose from a range of 'offers'. Evidence emerges that this bureaucratisation of what is, essentially, a practice based on informal *processes* can prove deleterious. Typically, detached youth workers, with

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[33] See May, S. (1999) *Critical Multiculturalism – Rethinking Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education,* London: Falmer; McLaren, P. (1995) *White terror and oppositional agency: towards a critique of multiculturalism,* in D.T. Goldberg (ed.) *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, pp. 45-74; and Thomas, P. (2007) *Moving on from 'Anti-Racism'? Understandings of 'Community Cohesion' held by youth workers,* Journal of Social Policy, 36, 3, pp. 435-455, Cambridge University Press.

[34] As recently debated in The Journal of Philosophy of Education, Volume 41, Number 4, November 2007: *The Common School and the Comprehensive Ideal.*

[35] See criticisms of *performativity* in education: Foucault, M. (1991) referred to in Burchell, G., Gordon, C. & Miller, P. (eds.) (1991) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality,* London: Harvester Wheatsheaf; and Lyotard, J-F. (1997) *The Postmodern Condition. A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[36] This has been hotly contested in youth work circles with, on the one hand, some commentators arguing adoption of a curriculum model is paradoxical and antithetical to youth work (see Stanton, N. (2004) *The Youth Work Curriculum and the Abandonment of Informal Education,* Youth & Policy, 85, p. 84); and, on the other, that it is a necessary 'modern position' (see, Merton, B. and Wylie, T. (2002) *Towards a Contemporary Curriculum for Youth Work,* Leicester: National Youth Agency, p. iv.). This 'curriculum debate', and the relationship between 'product' and 'process', is still in full swing.

[37] As referenced earlier.

'targets' to meet have been seen to focus on working with less challenging groups of young people, thereby further exacerbating the social inclusion of those most needy[38]. Earlier research intimated this might happen[39]; its continued disregard should be a cause for concern:

> 'Clearly, reaching those young people who are hardest to reach will be central to an effective assault upon social exclusion and this is where the contribution of detached and outreach youth work is seen to lie by both academic commentators[40] and policy makers… but they [the former] point to the tensions between the needs-led, client-centred, approach of traditional youth work and new approaches geared to more restrictive goals of insertion in education and training or the reduction or elimination of particular behaviours[41]'.

Further challenges come in the form of a recent drive to engage young people in 'positive activities'. Indeed, this is foundational to the government's 10-year strategy for youth[42]. Notwithstanding the tension between strategy[43] and democracy, the 'evidence' on which this is based appears problematic: Feinstein et al.[44] claim young people's involvement in unstructured activities (including attending a youth club) is a risk factor and predictive of poor outcomes. Policy interpretations have thus concluded 'structured' activities are 'positive'. That this implies 'adult-led' is no surprise. However, this fails to recognise that it is precisely the un-prescribed (as distinct from 'unstructured') nature of youth work that makes it attractive to many

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[38] This has been described as a 'pistachio effect', in which the harder nuts to crack are, at best, left until later, or, at worst, simply disregarded. See Tiffany, G. A. (2007) *Reconnecting Detached Youth Work: Guidelines and Standards for Excellence,* Leicester: Federation for Detached Youth Work, p. 27.

[39] Crimmens, D., Factor, F., Jeffs, T., Pitts, J., Pugh, C., Spence, J. and Turner, P. (2004) *Reaching socially excluded young people: A national study of street-based youth work*, Leicester: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p. 13. See also the findings of the Social Exclusion Unit Report – *Bridging The Gap*, an analysis of the responses to the Youth Support Service consultation: 'targets should avoid the potential for 'league table bias' by avoiding dealing with hardcore cases', 1999, p.13.

[40] Johnston, L., MacDonald, R., Mason, P., Ridley, L. and Webster, C. (2000) *Snakes and Ladders: Young People, transitions and social exclusion,* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Britton, L., Chatrick, B., Coles, B., Craig, G., Hylton, C. and Mumtaz, S. (2002) *Missing Connexions: The dynamics and welfare needs of black and minority ethnic young people at the margins,* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation; France, A. and Wiles, P. (1996) *The Youth Action Scheme: A report of the national evaluation,* London: DfEE.

[41] Pitts, J. (2001) *'Korrectional Karaoke': New Labour and the zombification of youth justice,* Youth Justice 1(2).

[42] *Aiming high for young people: a ten-year strategy for positive activities,* Department of Children, School and Families (2007). http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/tenyearyouthstrategy/docs/cyp_tenyearstrategy_260707.pdf

[43] From the Greek *Strategos*, or army general, and which conjures up the idea of a campaign planned to the last detail.

[44] Feinstein, L., Bynner, J. and Duckworth, K. (2005) *Leisure contexts in adolescence and their effect on adult outcomes,* London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning.

young people, not least those who have rejected authoritarianism elsewhere. Youth workers, therefore, defend this lack of structure at the point of young person's first engagement. Thereafter, they negotiate frameworks in order that interests can be pursued and needs met. With no hint of irony, the 'evidence base' recognises this point: 'Replacing what currently counts as 'hanging out' with a more structured curriculum is not necessarily going to appeal. The risk is that it may stimulate all the negative connotations of schooling that put young people off education in the first place'[45].

The significance of first engaging with their context is, therefore, underlined, as is the fact that this is, in all senses, a democratic way of working. If we must extrapolate in curricular terms, this means: 'The notion of 'core' and 'periphery' in knowledge is made problematic. The starting point for the construction of curricular knowledge is the culture(s) of the communities themselves, not only in terms of content but in perspective as well'[46].

Democracy has important, and often overlooked, pedagogic functions[47]; people learn through their experience of it. The fact that it can offer a tangible return for an individual's investment[48], in that they see things changing on the basis of their participation also supports 'buy-in'.

Whether the emerging context of a drive to 'offer' a mix of universal (i.e. open-access), targeted and specialist services under the banner of 'Integrated Youth Support Services' (and funded through a regime of commissioning and markets) can maintain democratic credentials is open to question. Perhaps, as was noted above, the parallel commitment to 'youth voice' and 'empowerment' will do more to define a new paradigm of education. And yet many fear that this is no more than a ruse for a wider neo-liberal agenda[49].

Privatisation has extended further. 'The street' - that primary location in which detached youth work takes place – is increasingly politicised, its historical neutrality as *public* space is threatened. An 'off-the-street' mentality toward young people now dominates. The use of curfews[50], dispersal orders and various other apparatus under the Anti-social behaviour and Respect agendas have significantly affected the work of detached youth workers who have long since creatively employed this neutrality as a stimulus for challenging young people to take responsibility for their actions. In combination, public space is eroded in its value as civic space. This compromises it as a site for democratic activity:

[45] Margo, J., and Dixon, M. with Pearce, N. and Reed, H. (2006) *Freedom's Orphans. Raising Youth in a Changing World,* London: IPPR, p. 125.

[46] Apple, M.W. and Gandin, L.A. (2002) *Challenging neo-liberalism, building democracy: creating the Citizen School in Porto Alegre. Brazil.* Journal of Educational Policy, 2002, Vol. 17, No. 2, 267.

[47] ibid. p. 262.

[48] Abers, R. (2000b) *Overcoming the Dilemmas of Participatory Democracy: The Participatory Budget Policy in Porto Alegre, Brazil*. Electronic book (Projecto Democracia Participativa).

[49] Rees, G. (2003) *Democratic Devolution and Education Policy in Wales: The emergence of a national system?* Cardiff: School of Social Sciences: Cardiff University.

[50] Subsequently judged a contravention of human rights and withdrawn.

The exercise of democracy begins as exercise, as walking around, becoming familiar with the streets, comfortable with strangers, able to imagine your own body as powerful and expressive rather than a pawn. People who are at home in their civic space preserve the power to protest and revolt, whereas those who have been sequestered into private space do not[51].
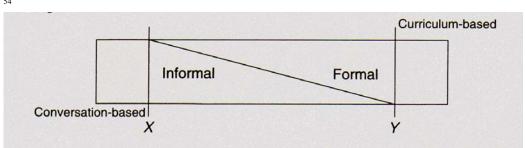
As a metaphor this may, for many, be far-removed from other educational settings. Nonetheless, it acts as a powerful stimulus to consider to what extent these, other, settings are, or can be, sites for democratic learning. Can the school of the future be conceived of as a civic space? Let us see:

An Education, then, for the 21st Century?

In asking 'what constitutes an educated 19-year old in the 21st century'[52] our thoughts might turn to how, if in any way, this exploration of informal education might enlighten an education for the 21st century.

The concept of the school is far removed from the street-corner locus of detached youth work. And yet, in many senses, they are both features of the community in which they are located. Progressive ideas of the community *as* school[53] might suggest value in some kind of merger, or at least a dialogue, between the twin traditions of informal and formal education. As Foreman points out[54], and as young people daily attest, they are but two sides of a coin. The good teacher, they say, is someone they have a relationship with, is someone who is prepared to listen to them. That teacher treads well a continuum of formality. In the same vein, a good informal educator is aware of the great value of formal interludes[55]. And, lest we forget, informal educators *are* teachers[56].

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51 Solnit, R. (2006) *Democracy should be exercised regularly, on foot,* The Guardian, 6th July, 2006. http://guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/jul/06/comment.politics, accessed 21/01/2008.
52 A question that has become defining of the Nuffield Review.
53 Illich, I. (1973) *Deschooling Society,* Harmondswoth: Penguin.
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adapted from Ellis, J. W. (1990) *Informal Education: a Christian Perspective*, in T. Jeffs and M. Smith (eds.) *Using Informal Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 97.
55 Jeffs, T. and Smith, M.K. (1999) *Informal Education – conversation, democracy and learning,* Ticknall: Education Now, p. 5.
56 Smith, M. (1988) *Developing Youth Work. Informal education, mutual aid and popular practice*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Can these two worlds collaborate more substantively? Perhaps no option exists. A rapidly-changing world, with all the uncertainty that that implies, might be seen to demand it. The importance of inclusion and engagement appear non-negotiable. Does *participation* hold the key? Might it solve the accountability conundrum by ensure we assess for learning first, and whatever else thereafter? Certainly it would seem that young people need to be integral to this project, that their voice needs to be listened to, rather than simply heard.

Interests and motivations are also important, not just among young people but in their wider communities. Where educational activities reflect the needs of these communities *buy-in* occurs. That this is not implied ordinarily is testament to an education system with a range of weaknesses, all of which need to be addressed. Where young people experience that system negatively, the danger exists that they will contribute (whether wittingly or unwittingly) to a future cultural landscape that can inhibit the learning of the next generation. It is a generation that sorely needs a good education.

Detached youth work surely teaches us one thing: 'effective face-to-face work appears to require greater scope for discretion, negotiation and innovation'[57]. Recognising that this face-to-face dimension defines education as a human project is all-important; whether policy and practice trends are in this direction is open to question.

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[57] Crimmens, D., Factor, F., Jeffs, T., Pitts, J., Pugh, C., Spence, J. and Turner, P. (2004) *Reaching socially excluded young people: A national study of street-based youth work*, Leicester: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, p. 74.