

# Population Health

<b>title</b>	<b>"It Sort of Widens the Health Word" - Evaluation of a Health Promotion Intervention in the Youth Work Setting</b>
<b>author</b>	Hodgins, M., <sup>1</sup> Swinburne, L. <sup>2</sup> Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI, Galway <sup>1</sup> Department of Health Promotion, NUI Galway and National Youth Council of Ireland <sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Defined as a place or social context in which people engage in daily activities where environmental, organisational and personal factors interact to effect health and well-being, youth organisations qualify as appropriate settings for health promotion. This study presents the results of an evaluation of the Health Quality Mark (HQM), a settings-based health promotion intervention in youth organisations facilitated by the National Youth Health Programme (NYHP).

## OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study was to conduct an impact and process evaluation of the HQM focusing on impacts as perceived by stakeholders (perceived benefits and/or disadvantages of participating in the HQM) on the strengths and weaknesses of the process operated by the NYHP in implementing the HQM, and the appropriateness of the criteria in the award.

## METHODOLOGY

The study sampling frame included all youth organisations that had completed the HQM either fully (16) or partially (11). Thirty seven personnel (management and Health Promotion staff) were available across 19 organisations for a semi-structured interview. Young people (9) were interviewed in a focus group setting in one organisation.

## RESULTS

The perceptions of health promoters, team members and management with regard to the impact of the HQM were very positive, including both individual behaviour and organisational level changes. Those interviewed commented on the how the HQM impacted on the whole organisation, and the place of health within it. The HQM was perceived to raise awareness of health, validate and extend good practice in youth organisations and in health promotion, and to engender a sense of pride in the youth organisation. In relation to process, a number of factors emerged which contributed to the success of the HQM as a health promotion initiative. These included the structure and award-based nature of the initiative, management buy-in, the embedded training, and support from the NYHP.

## **CONCLUSION**

The HQM is a successful settings-based health promotion intervention. The HQM initiative makes health more visible and acts as a vehicle or framework for good practice. The ideological consistency between the principles of youth work and health promotion may contribute to the success of the initiative.

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