



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Message from President Michael D. Higgins
Galway Roscommon ETB/ETBI Youth Work Conference
29 May 2025

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, may I extend my warmest greetings to all those participating in the ETBI Youth Work Matters Conference hosted by the Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board.

This gathering of those dedicated to the promotion and practice of youth work across Ireland is a valuable opportunity to reflect collectively on both the achievements and the challenges that shape this vital field.

Youth work, in its many diverse expressions, plays a crucial role in our society. As a unique sphere of learning and growth, it fosters the personal and social development of our young people, offering them skills and knowledge, a sense, too, of belonging, empowerment, and agency. It is a form of education that respects and responds to the lived experience of the young person, nurturing imagination, resilience and critical thinking.

Throughout the years, youth work in Ireland has evolved to meet the changing landscape of our society. Its contemporary focus, and it is so important now more than ever, is on those who face particular challenges or who live on society's margins, young people experiencing economic hardship, social exclusion, or cultural displacement, members of the Traveller community, our migrant communities, LGBTQ+ youth, and all those who may find themselves isolated or vulnerable.

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This compassionate work is profoundly important for the creation of a more inclusive, just and participatory Republic. It speaks to the spirit of the Proclamation of cherishing all of the children of the nation equally. It is an expression too of the collective good, and of a society that takes seriously the potential, the creativity and the inherent dignity of all its young citizens, allowing them to play their own important role in the crafting of our shared world.

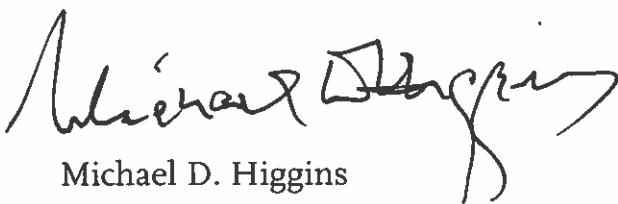
May I acknowledge particularly the extraordinary contribution of the many volunteers who, with quiet dedication, enrich the lives of young people across the country. Their work is often unsung, but it is deeply valued. Molaim sibh.

As President of Ireland, may I extend my deep gratitude to all of you for the vital role you play in helping young people to overcome adversity, to discover their capacities, and to imagine and shape a better future, both for themselves and for their communities.

May your conference be one of fruitful dialogue, shared wisdom and renewed commitment.

Guím Comhdháil an-torthúil oraibh agus gach rath i ngach ceann de bhur n-iarrachtaí sa todhchaí.

Beir beannacht.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael D. Higgins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael D. Higgins

Uachtarán na hÉireann

President of Ireland