



BA in Contemporary Culture and Society

**What impact does NEAR FM have on the  
North Side of Dublin in terms of Social  
Return on Investment (SROI)?**

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## **Abstract**

This study was carried out in order to fully analyse the impact NEAR FM has on the North Side of Dublin in terms of the developing term Social Return on Investment. In this dissertation, we outline the fundamentals of community radio, the objectives and foundations of the practice and the possible future of the concept.

This research was qualitative in order to gain an insight into the workings of the people who have liaised with NEAR FM. Two groups of interviewees were questioned, to ensure a broad understanding of the organisation. They were asked questions surrounding their experiences; how they found it, did they learn anything useful and did they have any recommendations, amongst other pertinent questions.

Overall, we found many benefits developed by the establishment of NEAR FM as a community tool. Interviewees cited having enjoyable experiences during their training program, with an increased sense of independence and self-efficacy. We found NEAR FM served a definite purpose to the community of North Dublin.

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## **1.1 Chapter One: Introduction**

Community radio encapsulates all the elements of a successful, modern society. In this thesis, we are going to observe this thesis statement in the broader context of the benefits of community radio, and specifically NEAR FM. We will begin our introduction by offering a justification of our research topic; why it is relevant, new and something that is bringing an innovative perspective to the field.

I will then elaborate on NEAR media itself as a co-operative. This section will offer a general background into the establishment, its organisational and policy structure and finally, its funding methods.

For the ultimate section of our introduction, we will outline the structure of our dissertation; we will go through exactly what we are going to do, and rationalize why this is the most pertinent and relevant layout.

## **1.2 - Justification of Topic**

With the Republic of Ireland making a slow return to community engagement and development following the demise of the Celtic Tiger, this research title seems to be one of the rapidly growing contemporary buzz topics.

In liaison with Mr Brian Trench of the Community Knowledge Exchange, the people of NEAR media contacted the DCU affiliated program stating they wanted research conducted in reference to their overall community benefit, and specifically for the developing topic of Social Return on Investment (SROI). With Mr Trench approaching students with different topics and research titles in 2013, I chose to do this subject.

There are many reasons why this research title was something of interest. As previously stated, the concept of community and what that means in contemporary Irish society is of central importance to this thesis. As we will research in chapter two, the growth of this concept has undergone fluctuations

of meanings and interest; seeking to understand our current position is of vital importance.

SROI was another aspect of the title that interested me. As a relatively new concept, I wanted to further explore its foundations and how it could be applied to a community radio station. As documented in chapter two, SROI has had a history of documenting the fundamental benefits of non-profit organisations, and help better explain to investors the broad benefits they offer. As a personal interest of mine, this added to my decision to select this as a topic.

But most importantly, this project aims to serve to document the impacts community media has as a force in society. This thesis will outline to what extent this impact is felt, and of what importance it is to fundamental social change in society. We will attempt to answer questions that have not been asked thoroughly in previous scholarly works; what impact does NEAR FM actually have in its area, is it useful, and is there a future for similar community media in the Irish landscape.

### **1.3 - NEAR Media Co-Operative**

North East Access Radio, NEAR FM, with its frequency at 101.6, has the potential to broadcast to 100,000 people living on the North Side of Dublin. With its headquarters based in Coolock, its frequency extends to some of Dublin's most deprived areas including Beaumont, Raheny, Kilbarrack, Donaghmede and Artane (Day, 2003).

NEAR media was intentionally set up in the North Dublin location. The original aims and objectives of the organisation were political (Day, 2003, p.115). At the time of the station's foundation during the 1980's severe economic issues, parts of north Dublin had some of the highest levels of unemployment in Ireland. Gaining its license in 1995 after several years of closure, the radio station sought to tackle the society's social issues.



Former President of NEAR FM Jack Byrne stated in an interview that he and his team wanted to change the opinion of the area from an area of “murders, a killing and a joyriding crash” to a place instead where the power was placed in the people’s hands (Humphreys, 2013). They were motivated to bring fundamental social change, influenced by the “principles and organisation of the credit union movement and tenant rights organisations” (Day, 2003, p.115).

With the radio station running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the station sees itself very much as a community development tool, “more so perhaps than any other Irish community radio station” (Lynch, 2003, p.52). According to Chairman of the NEAR Co-operative, Ciaran Murray states the station “plays a key role of a communication tool for the community, recording, promoting, investigating, analysing, archiving. It has helped develop the community by offering the above” (Lynch, 2003, p.60).

On the station’s website it declares its policy:

‘Programming incorporates a positive emphasis on areas such as facilitating and supporting community development, providing access and providing a platform to a wide range of local groups’. (NEAR FM, 2014)

As one of the core community radio stations in Ireland, many of the staff and volunteers are involved with AMARC-International and are the main organisers of the National Association. The radio station is still aiming to involve more “cooperation between grassroots movements” and greater public ownership of content (2014).

According to TNS/MRBI figures from 2013, about 6 per cent of the catchment area, about 12,000 people, listened to the radio station during a seven-day period. To add to this, a 2012 survey found that 67 per cent of people were aware of a community radio station, with 41 per cent indicating they had listened to it (Humphreys, 2013).

Their programming varies widely, with a strict 60-40 ratio of talk and music. In their work, they attempt to make highfalutin topics accessible to listeners of all demographics. Portrayed well in Irish Independent journalist Darragh McManus' article, he states the radio station makes a "refreshing change from the usual local radio" (McManus, 2014). He commented on the radio station's approach to a show examining the EU policies that affect the public's daily lives. He described the show's topic as something that can often be "monolithic, impenetrable...into something that seems relevant to each of us" (2014).

In terms of funding, the radio station has a mixture of local sponsorship, radio advertising and receives funding from the Community Employment scheme, from Irish and European government schemes.

#### **1.4 - Structure of Dissertation**

To fully secure the successful implementation of a reasonable account of the topic, there has to be a fundamental structure in place. For this dissertation, each section had a central subject matter to ensure the dissertation flowed well with a sense of cohesion and unity.

Beginning with chapter two, we explore the theoretical framework of the previous scholars and academics with the pertinent topic. This chapter analyses the relevance of what has been published before, and to convey the previous knowledge and ideas surrounding community media and development. Here, we will also delve into SROI as a concept, offering a historical understanding and its practical implementations.

For the methodology section, we will outline the practice used to collect the research data. As will be explained in the section, this research question was most suitable for a qualitative study. This was a topic that required further exploring of the participants nature and environment. In this section, we will further outline the subjects required for the purpose of interviewing, the ethical considerations and the limitations of this methodical framework.

In chapter three, we will outline the research findings in an objective manner. To fully and succinctly understand them, we will break the chapter into three different parts; firstly, we will outline the training both groups undertook as part of their participation. Here, we will also overlook the show formats both engaged with. As part of our data collection contained interviews with both key informants and participants, we will document the findings of these interviews separately, extracting the main trends and themes observed.

In chapter four, our analysis, we discuss our research findings in context with our literature. This will provide the link between our results and the conclusions arising from it. We will analyse the emerging themes, how they compare and are dissimilar to each other. Here, we will also have the opportunity to analyse what is surprising or unanticipated from our results, in reference to the literature.

Finally, in the conclusion we will summarize our argument by reiterating our thesis statement. We will include a brief summary of our overall findings. We will also document the implications of our study, the limitations of our research findings and further areas of possible research. We will ultimately conclude by restating the purpose of the study, further justifying its importance.

## **2.1 Chapter Two – Literature Review**

“The success of community radio cannot be measured using the criteria that is applied to commercial and public sector radio, like JNLR (Joint National Listenership Research) figures and advertising revenue respectively. Community radio is judged as a success based on its record in reaching out to members of its particular community, giving all members of that community equal access and being a tool for real community development” (Lynch, 2003, p.40).

Community radio encapsulates all the elements of a successful, modern society. In order to fully understand our topic, we will begin by analysing the term community development. Beginning with the origin of the term, how and when it transferred to Ireland will also be analysed. This will establish a firm critical understanding of the concept and how it has been received in Irish culture and society. Elaborating from community development, community engagement programs involved with the media are important to understand our thesis title. This will offer a current understanding of how Ireland has reached its current state in terms of communal media development, and what the future may hold for the term.

Continuing on, defining and understanding the concept Social Return on Investment (SROI) is of crucial importance to fully comprehend our topic. We will firstly offer a succinct definition of the term, and then continue by further examining how the process is implemented from a practical perspective. Also, we will take into consideration both the advantages and disadvantages of SROI; how useful and effective it is will be taken into consideration. To conclude, we will examine a community radio station based in Limerick City; this will offer a further understanding of the topic.

## **2.2 - Community development**

A very useful resource though out my study was Rosemary Day’s PhD entitled Community Radio in Ireland (Day, 2003). As she notes in her PhD, “the media do not create community but they can help to benefit it”. With the growing

emphasis in contemporary society around competition, entrepreneurship and individualisation, there has also been growth at the same time for community. In order to fully understand our topic, a succinct working definition for community is “groups of citizens who, through their on-going interactions, form relationships based on trust, mutuality and reciprocity” (Brown & Robyn, 2003).

According to chairperson of Combat Poverty Agency Anna Lee, her article ‘Community Development in Ireland’ outlines the history of the concept (Lee, 2003). The term emerged during the cooperative development movement taking place in Ireland in the 1800’s. Established in 1937 by John M Canon Hayes, Muintir Na Tire (MNT) was one of the foremost and primary community development organisations advocating the principles of local initiative and self-reliance. Translated from Gaelic the term means People of the Land or Country (Muintir na Tíre, 2014).

Until the 1950’s, Ireland remained an “economic backwater on the fringe of Europe” (Share et al., 2003). In terms of community development models, most had failed to modernise the agricultural or industrial sectors, halt emigration or improve living standards. However in the 1960’s a new era of prosperity was introduced by way of state supported foreign industrialisation and free trade. A source that I found very relevant and useful was Jackson and Doherty’s book ‘Community Development in Ireland’; here, the authors state the predominate models of community development were introduced by the UK in the 1960’s (Jackson & O’Doherty, 2012, p.16). Derived from the developments of the left wing theorists of the welfare state in the UK, strong arguments grew for the legitimacy of community development as a “practice response to empowerment and anti poverty issues” (2012, p.16).

Based in Tipperary and currently known as the National Association for the Promotion of Community Development in Ireland, for almost eighty years Muintir Na Tire (MNT) argued in favour of self-reliant rural communities. In 1989, the crime prevention scheme Community Alert was set up by MNT in cooperation with An Garda Síochána; the program was developed following

several attacks on elderly people in their homes, which made people feel uneasy in their residences (An Garda Siochana, 2011). The body has also been involved at local level with commodity organisations, parish councils guilds and community councils. Elaborating on the benevolent effects of MNT, University of Limerick sociology academic Dr Eoin Devereux states the organisation has “tirelessly been a persistent and sometimes lone voice in the world of Irish community development” (Devereux, 1993).

In their book ‘A Sociology of Ireland’, Mary Corcoran et al. discuss how Ireland has a long history of an “urge towards community” (Share et al., 2003). The book also examines how Catholic corporatism influenced community development in the early decades of the last century. The authors state that their impact “sought to minimize state intervention in civil society” so that people could express their Christianity through the voluntary organisations of their own social and economic lives (2003). Catholic corporatism urged people through to sectoral or local organisations to take control of their daily lives.

During this time the principles and objectives of community development became solidified and grew. In their article, academics O’Cinneide and Walsh outline four strands with the emergence of the practice up to 1990 in Ireland (O’Cinneide & Walsh, 1990). Beginning with community development cooperatives, these organisations provided a “practical alternative to state models of developments” (1990, p.326). With its structure as a co-op, the local community sought to benefit and control their local natural resources, like local handcrafts and tourism. Supported by direct state assistance and with a commercial focus, these co-ops were based mainly in the Gaeltacht. By the 1980’s they had declined considerably (1990, p.326).

Of increasing importance in the 1980’s were the locally operated community based social services. There were 300 such community service organizations by 1978 (1990). With a responsibility to deliver community care services, the establishment of health boards in 1970 “effectively challenged the role and contribution of these organisations” (Lee, 2003, p.54).

The 1980's saw a significant growth of community projects attempting to develop responses to unemployment. Drawing financial support from the labour affairs sector of the government, the project was active in terms of job creation, training and welfare rights. The final strand of O'Connell and Walsh's research related to anti-poverty projects. Stemming from the growth of poverty in the early 1970's, the 1973 establishment of the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty and the first EU Poverty Programme sought to address this topic. In turn, a "structural analysis of poverty was linked with community development principles" (Lee, 2003, p.54).

The 1990's saw a significant change in the context for community development because of two interconnected developments. The Irish government began to realize, recognize, develop and support community development as a way of addressing social exclusion and poverty. In turn, during this period there were many organisations established with aims of using community development for social change, targeting disadvantaged communities and overcoming poverty.

However, in the early 2000's, community development did have support, yet, was still met with some challenges. The term and its practice had moved firmly from the margins to a central part of society for anti-poverty and social inclusion. The key challenges that face the sector are primarily around how community development is done.

Lee states in her article that there is a growing concern around the sector that the "commitment to community development as a means to achieve positive social change is being reduced and/or undermined" (Lee, 2003, p.55). She elaborates by stating significant social change that could eradicate poverty depends on an effective social change analysis.

In his article, NUI Maynooth academic Séamus Ó'Connell states in order to understand and explain recent trends in Irish community development, one must be accompanied with the wider social and economic background

(O’Cinneide & Walsh, 1990). As his opening article suggests, “few societies have changed so rapidly and radically as has the Republic of Ireland since 1960” (1990).

As Curtin and Varley note in their book section, community development in Ireland has taken two forms: firstly, one that attempts to work with the state for local development, which they identify as integrationist; the second approach works more towards mobilising against the state, in particular against power at the local level, which they term as oppositional (Curtin & Varley, 1995). For the former, the above MNT fits into this category; projecting itself as “concerned only with the common good”, the organisation transcended social class, religions, political party and gender (1995).

Today, the community development sector has become to constitute itself as a major force and an actor in its own right (Share et al., 2003, p.129). This can be represented with the success of the FÁS community enterprise, amongst other EU initiatives.

As can be seen, community development is a relatively recent phenomenon in the Republic of Ireland. With its clear aims and objectives now devised, there have been attempts to translate this model into other parts of society. Most notably with the media, where community engagement programs are slowly developing across the country.

### **2.3 - Community Engagement Programs in the Media**

Community Engagement, as defined by the United Nations is “the drawing in of citizens and particularly disadvantaged groups to the governance of public institutions” (United Nations, 2008). Elaborating from this, a recent Irish report delved into the concept of civic and community engagement; it found that the term is crucial in developing policy for sustained economic and social development (Carney et al., 2011).



This report elaborated on how marginalized citizens can sometimes be excluded from the decision making process. To aid this, there is a need to widen democratic participation; to extend, “governance in the public interest cannot be realized without the participation of all citizens” (2011). Critics of the modern Irish democratic society question the extent to which they allow for citizen engagement in important policy changes.

In 1979, UNESCO published a report where they examined the quintessential aspects of this medium. Firstly, they state access and participation is one of the main priorities for community communications (UNESCO, 1979). The report also elaborates on how the role of the media plays in development can be “overemphasized”, stating that progress requires a variety of initiatives in order to be successful (1979).

To ensure a standard is maintained in community media, AMARC, an organisation developed in 1983 forms the “backbone of the community radio global movement” (Lynch, 2003). Entitled the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (French translation), when signing up to the organisation, its 3000 members must adhere to a set of principles. Firstly, they must contribute to the expression of different social, political and cultural movements; be accepting and tolerant of people’s differences. Secondly, in helping disadvantaged groups, they must recognize the fundamental and specific role of women in establishing new communication processes.

Also in the organisation’s principles, members must express certain views in their programming. Firstly, they must convey sovereignty and independence of all peoples. The affiliates must also demonstrate international cooperation based on equality, reciprocity and mutual respect for others. Future members must also demonstrate non-discriminatory based on sex, race, religion or sexual preferences and finally respect for the cultural identity of peoples (Lynch, 2003, p15). Many of the predominant Irish community media groups are members of the organisation.

As the purpose of our dissertation is to understand the impact of NEAR FM, in order to equate this for future social investors, we are going to analyse the term SROI and state its importance in relevance to the study.

#### **2.4 - Concept of Social Return on Investment**

In their book, Ridley Duff and Bull articulately state that Social Return On Investment (SROI) “enables a social enterprise to identify the benefits of their service to any other party expressed in financial terms” (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2011). The process is adapted from the traditional economic tool of cost-benefit analysis, defined by Ridley Duff as a methodology to capture the “non-market value created by investment activity” (2011). The method aims to “translate social impacts into financial value” (2011).

Jed Emerson of the US Roberts Enterprise Development Fund first developed the term and this method in January 1997 (The SROI Network, 2014). After setting up the organisation, they attempted to tackle the notion that people in the non-profit sector’s work was not being documented or appreciated and, in turn, undervalued. Emerson stated there was an absence of appropriate measurements by which the value of these organisations may be tracked, calculated and demonstrated “to the philanthropic and public investments financing those impacts” (Emerson & Cabaj, 2000).

Following Emerson’s development, the UK’s leading think tank promoting social, economic and environmental justice, The New Economics Foundation (NEF) further adapted the term (New Economics Foundation, 2014). In liaison with the British government’s Ministry of the Third Sector, they developed a substantial guide for future practitioners; it included all aspects, from what it is, how to implement it, amongst other relevant details (Cabinet Office: Office of the Third Sector, 2009).

Emerson’s concept of SROI included the value creation process and discussed the process of economic value and social value. For the latter, the author defines

social value as “when resources, inputs, processes or policies are combined to generate improvements in the lives of individuals or society as a whole” (Emerson, 1999). He elaborates by stating that it is in this area that non-profit organisations justify themselves compared to for-profit organisations. However it is this area that is most problematic to measure for its true created value; it has “intrinsic value but can be difficult to agree upon or quantify”.

Another clear definition of SROI offered by the NEF is “an analytical tool for measuring and accounting for a much broader concept of value, taking into account social, economic and environmental factors” (New Economics Foundation, 2014). As it is a very recent definition, credence is lent to its value. The author continues by stating many things we value can sometimes not be easily captured in traditional economic terms. In reference to conventional cost benefit analysis, the author elaborates by affirming simple costs and prices are the only metrics considered for analysing for profit organisations.

On their website, the SROI Network further discusses how the method is an “approach to understanding and managing the impacts of a project, organisation or policy” (The SROI Network, 2014). The network goes into further detail as to how the process can benefit the economic, social and environmental outcomes created by an organisation. At the core of SROI, there is a belief that social equality and wellbeing are being compromised by the current methods in placing value in businesses. Overall, the aim of SROI is to “increase the social value or impact of your work” (2014). In figure 1, an assessment can be made demonstrating how social enterprises contribute to their goal.

Table 12.2 SROI impact analysis

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service contracts</li> <li>• Grants</li> <li>• Sales revenues</li> <li>• Volunteer time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Work placements</li> <li>• Jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people involved in training</li> <li>• Number and level of qualifications obtained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job skills learned</li> <li>• Soft skills learned</li> <li>• Well-being, social and personal development,</li> <li>• Life satisfaction</li> <li>• Increases in income</li> <li>• Reduced dependence on benefits</li> <li>• Reduction in reoffending and crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subtract what would have happened anyway to estimate <i>impact</i></li> <li>• Check that each column leads to accomplishing the mission</li> </ul>

Source: based on NEF, 2006

Figure 1

In order to follow the SROI model effectively, there are some issues that must first be considered as to ensure the greatest use of the model (Nicholls, 2009). An impact map is to be drawn, intending to analyse how impact will be achieved. This is where the terms ‘inputs’, ‘outputs’, ‘outcomes’ and ‘impacts’ are conceptualised. In the SROI model, inputs represent the total costs of the project.

NEF’s approach is to move beyond ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’, instead more consider ‘outcomes’ and ‘impacts’. As previously stated, this is to facilitate the qualitative changes in the “lives of the people affected” (2009) by the services of the organisation.

Further to this, ‘impacts’ is another qualitative process that can be examined. An assessment is made first, trying to understand whether the outcomes during the impact analysis would have been achieved anyway without the social enterprises interactions. Following from this, a monetary study of the qualitative changes can be assessed and aggregated. This information can then be presented to portray the value of each €1 to prospective funders and investors.

Elaborating from this, SROI can be described as being designed to meet the needs of social investors. It is more than an accounting tool however; it is also a way of “thinking that enables a social enterprise to identify the benefits of their service

to any other party expressed in financial terms” (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2011, p.239).

There have been noted disadvantages to the SROI process. As a number is offered at the end of the process, the SROI Network state “the number is not as important as the story” (The SROI Network, 2014); nevertheless, the number frequently does become the focus and the basis on which it is calculated (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2011).

Extending from this, another noted disadvantage of the SROI methodology is the lack of reliable set benchmarks or industry standards (Nicholls, 2009, p.36). As Nicholls notes, reliable comparative analysis of rates of return become almost impossible. Secondly, there are a limited number of accepted proxies by which to monetize social value. These disadvantages note the shortcomings of the concept, and may lead to an inaccurate portrayal of results.

As we understand the concept of SROI, we can now move forward into examining the impact community radio has had on the Irish landscape, specifically with one station based in Limerick City. This will serve to give a broader context when we begin to analyse NEAR FM later in the dissertation.

## **2.5 - Community Development in Radio around Ireland**

One of the main differences, articulated by scholar Priscilla Lynch, between commercial and community radio is that “community radio aims to empower its audiences and sees them as part of it, to be served, rather than consumers” (Lynch, 2003). Also expressed by Jack Byrne of NEAR media is the marginalisation that occurs in commercial radio (2003).

Based in Limerick Institute of Technology, University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College, Wired FM is a community radio station that is firmly steeped in providing “access, communication and participation” for all third level students and the broader Limerick community (Wired FM, 2014). Started by

Rosemary Day, similarly to NEAR media its objectives were also community developed focussed; beginning with the colleges in the town, she would expand and offer media training to those marginalised.

People of disadvantaged groups including women, refugees and travellers have all received formal media training. This entails education with interview techniques, broadcasting protocol, libel law, presentation and technical skills (Lynch, 2003, p.47). In terms of the disabled community, young cerebral palsy students were taught community radio training and empowered to create programmes surrounding disability issues. From Enable Ireland, the participants began to make series of ten programs. Currently Wired's programming reflects this objective of community development, with several shows including 'The Community Show' dedicated to highlight particular issues in a reflective and realistic manner (Wired FM, 2014). Further exemplifying their dedication to represent the community, the radio station recently announced their documentary series entitled 'Somewhere over the Rainbow'. The four part series will aim to document the lives of 'LGBT-identified people living in Limerick', also including the relevant societies of the two principle universities in the area (Wired FM, 2014).

To reflect this ideology, its core principle in its programming policy is open access. Starting from a small studio in Mary Immaculate College to a station encompassing three studios, it has a large impact on the Limerick community. And further growing from a station originally on air for two hours a day, four days a week, to a station with ten hours a day also demonstrates its presence and influence in the area. Through its reaching out to disadvantaged members of Limerick, it has always remained true to its original objectives of inclusion and access.

Wired FM has demonstrated its tireless attitude to further include all members of the community and increase the quality of their programming. It has also put effort into following all the community radio criteria as envisaged by AMARC

(Lynch, 2003). These ideals of community radio stations are being transformed from theory into practice;

“Community radio stations are not simply passive transmitters of information or hit music; they are a catalyst for building community, for improving health and education, for fostering a civil society. These are no longer theoretical visions; many stations now demonstrate all of these goals” (Siemering, 2000).

### **3.1 Chapter Three: Methodology**

#### **3.2 - Methodological Framework**

For this dissertation, the most suitable methodological framework to obtain findings was qualitative. This was the most appropriate because of the nature of the research title. The framework consisted of nine interviews with two predominant organisations that were heavily involved with NEAR FM. Three of these interviews were with key informants who directly liaised with the station, helping to establish the link with NEAR FM. The remaining interviews were conducted with participants of the NEAR FM training program.

#### **3.3 - Rationalisation of Qualitative Study**

There were many reasons why a qualitative study was chosen. Firstly, I required an extensive amount of data and information (Creswell, 1998). I needed a detailed and comprehensive view to fully capture the essence of the organisation. Secondly, the research question lends itself to qualitative work as I'm inspecting the impact of NEAR FM on the community. As Creswell notes in his book, this was a research area that required to be "explored" (1998, p.17); variables could not be easily identified, with further theories requiring to be developed.

Elaborating on this point, as my research question is entitled "what", in contrast to a quantitative "why", I required to give an "initial foray into the topic" to describe what was going on (1998, p.17). Another reason a qualitative study was effective for this study was the fact that it allowed one to observe and interview participants in their natural setting. This meant the interviews were not as contrived, and lent a sense of authenticity (1998, p17).

Also, as this is an area I am passionate about, employing a qualitative approach allowed me to become an active learner who told the story of the participants view, rather than that of the experts (1998, p18). Elaborating from this, I also had an interest in a particular writing style (1998, p.18); for qualitative writing,



it is standard for the writer to bring themselves into the study, using the personal pronoun of “I”.

### **3.4 - Data Collection Instrument**

For the process of collecting data, semi-structured interviews were the most pertinent. Having a mild structure, there is room for open-ended replies. This allows for more spontaneous information to be revealed (Gordon, 2014). As Gordon’s guide notes, “new questions can be asked” to follow up replies; this allows more flexibility and question innovation. In contrast to highly structured interviews, these interviews allowed rich, varied, detailed answers, which may not be strictly possible in the former.

### **3.5 - Semi-Structured Interviews**

As previously stated, the interviews allowed flexibility. In comparison to a quantitative research, a level of engagement is established which allows for deeper and richer answers (Gordon, 2014). When devising the questions, an interview guide was created to maintain a structure. As I was dealing with a wide demographic in my interviews, including people of a broad socio demographic background and different mental capabilities, I crafted my questions for each group. This was to ensure relevance for the interviewees (Gordon, 1998, p.317). In turn, the language register used was to ensure a connection between us.

Also, I wanted to include a wide variety of question types; from introducing questions to create a sense of trust, to more probing questions. In his book Kvale recommends nine different types of questions to ensure all aspects are taken into account (Kvale, 1996).

From reading preparation literature before the interview, one of the predominant recommendations was to listen attentively to both verbal and non-verbal communication (Gordon, 2014). Demonstrated in the transcriptions, I took note of pauses as it offers a deeper insight into their non-verbal communication.

### **3.6 - Data Collection Process**

Previous to my research, NEAR FM identified relevant groups that would be appropriate to interview. After sending their contact details, I contacted the groups and arranged meetings. For the sake of ethical clearance, as I delve into later, I will be analysing each organisation under the alias of group one and group two; group one being a centre for youths with mental disabilities and group two being a regional youth service, both based in north Dublin. The interviews were held in their respective head offices with the former on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and the latter on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

In each group, there were five people to interview. Both groups had one key informant and four sets of participants. A key informant, for the sake of my research, is the manager of their respective organisation; they established the link with NEAR FM. The participants are the people who took part in the training process. The approximate time length of each group's interviews in total was about two hours. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee on an iPhone Five.

### **3.7 - Data Analysis**

The data analysis process has several different parts that must be adhered to ensure a fair study. All these interviews were audio recorded with the interviewee's permission and subsequently fully transcribed (see appendix). Transcription added many advantages; it allowed greater examination of what was said, permitted repeated analysis of their answers and allowed different themes to open clearly in the author's mind. However, there are noted disadvantages to interviewing and the transcription process. The process is time consuming, and requires modern audio technology (Gordon, 2014).

When analysing the data further, I utilised a thematic content analysis. Here, I classified the data into several different recurring themes (Creswell, 1998). I then proceeded to analyse the different headings in three different ways; the key

informants, the participants and the two groups were compared to further analyse their differences and similarities.

### **3.8 - Ethical Issues**

With this methodological framework, several ethical issues emerged. Beginning with my interviews with the centre for youth with mental disabilities, I was interviewing people who had both physical and mental disabilities. In order for my interviews to proceed, I had to obtain ethical clearance from my supervisor Dr Maria Loftus (see appendix). Also, before I interviewed each interviewee, I explicitly explained the purpose and intention of my study. This was to ensure, to the best of their knowledge, the focus of the information. As Creswell notes, this is too avoid deception about the nature of the study (1998, p132). I also adjusted my language register, to ensure the questions were as clear as possible to ensure clarity.

### **3.9 - Limitations of Study**

As my study has a qualitative approach, there were limitations to its findings. Firstly, in contrast to a quantitative approach, the findings cannot be generalised. Although emerging trends and themes converge from the results, they are not strict quantitative findings.

A limitation of an interview based, qualitative approach is the vast time consumption; in order to get in contact with key informants, organise the interviews, prepare the interview guide, go to the headquarters and transcribe the interviews, it took a vast amount of time.

Also, as it was my first time doing semi-structured interviews, it took practice to become familiar with the process of gaining relevant information. As the interviews had a very light structure, each of them flowed differently, which also made the data varied and not easy to reduce to general themes.

### **3.10 - Protecting anonymity**

To protect anonymity of informants, I created an identifying system; the groups were divided into numbers, with each interviewee having a specific letter (Creswell, 2006, p.132). At a random selection, the groups will be identified with a number, with interviewees being labelled with a random letter. This is to ensure confidentiality and protecting anonymity.

#### **3.10.1 - Labelling mechanism**

1. Group 1
  - a. A – Key Informant
  - b. B - Participant
  - c. C – Participant
  - d. D – Participant
2. Group 2
  - a. A – Key Informant
  - b. B – Key informant
  - c. C – Participant
  - d. D – Participant
  - e. E – Participant

### **3.11 - Summary**

Overall, this methodical framework was crafted to ensure a fair and equitable study of the subjects. Through rigorous planning, we treated each candidate with respect and regard.

## **4.1 - Chapter Four: Findings**

In this chapter we are going to present the results of our findings, without analysing or drawing conclusions. As discussed in my methodology section, in order to obtain the most relevant results from both our key informants and participants, we devised two separate interview guides.

For this section we have broken it down into chapters for clearer comprehension. Firstly, we will give a brief background into how the two groups were involved with NEAR FM, specifically to their training program and show format. We will continue by documenting the results of the key informants interviews, expanding on the common themes and trends. We will then document the results of the participants' interviews and classify their findings. Similarly, we will illustrate emerging themes and points of convergence.

## **4.2 - Show Formats**

Beginning with group one, the key informant outlined their radio series. The link, beginning in 1999 with NEAR, encompasses three radio series; originally set up with Jack Byrne, each series has had between five to eight programs. The topics of each show were chosen by the trainees and usually relevant to their lives, ranging from disability in sport, the difficulties of being disabled with public transport and disabilities in the mainstream workforce.

For group two, their involvement was also substantial; beginning with a small group visiting NEAR every week and doing interview skills, their interest grew and a show was developed every Saturday morning. With this show lasting for a short time, a radio series was established encompassing six programs. Similarly to group one, each program comprised of youth related topics; from bullying, relationships to alcohol and cigarettes, amongst others.

Both groups received NEAR FM training. This includes teaching of media analysis, the foundations of community radio, interview skills and a general background into audio editing. Different from group one, group two did field reporting, including vox pops in Dublin City Centre.

### **4.3 - Key Informants**

In this chapter, we are going to outline the findings of the key informants interviews. As I approached the interview with certain themes when devising the question guide, we will document their responses from all three key informants.

#### **4.3.1 - NEAR as a Community Radio Station**

From asking several questions around the topic of NEAR FM, all the key informants unanimously declared that because it is a community radio station, it made it easier for them to transition into the station. In the interview with group two B, they noted that NEAR FM “completely understood what our view was, had the same approach as us”. Elaborating from this point, the same key informant stated that this was sometimes not the same with other organisations, like An Garda Síochána and the Residents Association.

The informant expanded further on how their outlook is similar, specifically with their view of young people, stating they recognize the potential and talent of their volunteers, but also the “challenges that they face”. In line with this, the informant stated this made it a place where youth could feel welcomed and accepted. The other informant of group two expressed a parallel view, asserting that, as it is “an organisation that’s community based and wants the outreach, it was the perfect environment for us to work together”.

Similarly, with group one, the key informant stated that as they were both of a social background in the charity, non profit sector, it was easier for them to adapt; the informant continued by stating “it’s a great community partnership and community link”.

#### **4.3.2 - Recognition**

Recognition of the participants’ voices being heard was another key point exclaimed by all informants in their interviews. In reference to commercial radio, they stated that often their group’s demographic is not portrayed on mainstream media. Community media, they affirmed, gave a voice to disadvantaged groups. Beginning with group one, as it is an organisation dealing with physically and mentally disabled youth, the key informant declared NEAR FM “gives people...a

voice which you normally wouldn't see on mainstream radio". He continued by saying the platform offered them a place to express their opinions and experiences.

Similarly, as the youth centre is based in a lower socio economic area, the informant stated young people's voices were not being heard on for profit radio. However, in NEAR FM, the informer noted how they demonstrated enthusiasm and interest in hearing their perspectives.

#### **4.3.3 - Sense of Achievement**

Another key point mentioned by all the key informants is the sense of achievement and validation all their trainees received. Different to group one, group two is from a perceived under privileged area of Dublin; in turn, there was a major focus on building self-esteem.

In line with this, the youth group and NEAR FM in conjunction together held a large launch event in their headquarters after the completion of the program. Here, the finished radio pieces created by the young people were played, with the participants' friends and family all in attendance. As one of the informers noted, this acted as a "confidence booster".

#### **4.3.4 - NEAR FM as a Safe Place**

One major point from an informer of group two was how NEAR FM acted as a place of refuge, stating it acted as a "really warm, welcoming place" where they could learn and relax. Stemming off this, during the weekly programs in the station, the informer stated once "the record button was pressed", they began discussing topics that were relevant to them in an open environment. Similarly, the other informer of group two also mentioned how the station was always welcoming as a place of learning and development.

## **4.4 - Participants**

### **4.4.1 - Independence and Self-Efficacy**

Independence and self-efficacy were traits learned during the program. For group one, as a centre for mentally disabled youth, the steps taken toward a sense of independence were smaller than that compared to group two; a working definition of the term is “the fact of not depending on another” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014).

As the key informant of group one mentions, the learning process of NEAR FM began immediately, even with transport. He mentions how many of the participants in the program had never used public transport before, so using that for the first time to the radio station proved to be a step towards independence.

Different to this, with group two, independence came from the process of running the show often by themselves; participants came up with many of the different aspects of their radio show independently; from the design of it, to “what guest speakers they got in to talk about”. Elaborating from this, smaller details like what music to enter into the piece was decided by the trainees. As an example, key informant 2B stated if one of the show topics was alcohol and drugs, the trainees would choose a relevant song “from Oasis”. This process demonstrates critical, independent thinking.

Self-efficacy was a trait learned by the trainees. In a relevant journal, Zimmerman defines the term as “personal judgements of one’s capabilities to organize and execute courses of action to attain designated goals” (Zimmerman, 2000). Linked with independence, many courses of action taken throughout the trainees involvement led them to feeling they can achieve what they want. With group one, this is visible by one of the participants stating they wanted to further pursue their engagement with drama, a major component of NEAR’s radio show.

The purpose of role models was also important to establish self-efficacy, as the key informant 1A mentioned. He articulated how a previous mentally disabled



person who was involved with this organisation obtained a work placement with NEAR during his training. As someone who now “produces his own shows”, he has acted as an aspiration for the students, “showing all the trainees...what to do”.

In group two, participant C learnt the trait of self-efficacy. In his interview, he outlined how during his involvement with NEAR he found a “love for the media”. After this, he exclaimed he wanted to get more involved, so sought the intensive Mic Project based in Darndale. As a competitive program to gain entry into, through his involvement with NEAR FM, he had gained a sense of self-efficacy and believed he could achieve his goal.

Both these examples outline the process that involvement and participation have on trainees in the program. Through their contribution, they obtained a sense of independence and self-efficacy.

#### **4.4.2 - Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem**

Building self-confidence and self-esteem was also a common thread mentioned throughout the interviews. Beginning with the former, a working definition is “confidence in oneself” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014). Beginning with group two, the key informant mentioned that the experience with NEAR really “built their confidence”. The other informer of the youth group states this process was achieved by a couple of ways; firstly, he states “being in a different organisation” offered a basis for assurance. Also, the process of interviewing and meeting different people built a level of self-confidence.

Self esteem was also created during the process; a succinct definition of the term is holding a “favourable appreciation or opinion of oneself” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014) Beginning with group one, at the conclusion of their radio series, CRC Talks, it was broadcasted with many listeners on the station. This process established a sense of purpose. Following this, the participants were shortlisted for an award for their radio work. Being interviewed by three judges and invited to attend a major event, one of the participants described the

experience. He explained how during his training he learned to overcome his fear of speaking quietly and to speak more confidently.

#### **4.4.3 - Education**

Both formal and informal education acted as a major part of the NEAR FM program.

Beginning with the obvious, during their training period participants learned the basics of radio producing, editing and using a soundboard. This also extended to interviewing, overcoming fear and exercising the correct vocal pitch. This training, although intensive, is recognized throughout Ireland, as a participant explained during his interview.

Moving towards the actual construction of the radio series, voxpops were an important learning aspect for group two. Here they got to meet and approach various people around Dublin, adding to a learning of different social and interpersonal skills.

Informal education was also an important part of the learning process. For example, for group two, many viewpoints and perspectives were challenged during their radio series. As each show had a different topic relevant to their life, one show on relationships had interesting outcomes; many of the girls had “preconceived notions” about what men want, however the guys retaliated and said it was more important to have “someone they can talk to”. This is a minor example of the education process.

Both groups also learned extensively about community radio. Beginning with group one, the key informant appreciated the fact that it was a place where people of all backgrounds can express “their own opinions and experiences”. With group two, the participants learned about the foundations of this medium and what it stood for. Through their participation, the informant stated the trainees learned the foundations about community radio and media.

#### **4.4.4 - Sense of Community and Friendship**

Based in an underprivileged part of Dublin, as stated by the group two informant, the youth of this area face “a lot of challenges, a lot of at risk circumstances”. It is for this reason that this chapter is strongly more relevant to this group. The key informant spoke eloquently about how the participants involvement led to many benefits; beginning with “developing their social skills”, they were also building healthy relationships with each other, the NEAR volunteers and the key informants. This in turn led to the participants being in an easier place to talk about issues like “health, mental health, physical health”.

The informer affirmed that strong friendships were established during the radio series, stating that some of the young people would not show up to the youth centre, but “always showed up for the NEAR FM programs”. She stated this is directly related to the comfortable atmosphere created by the station, with two of the participants going away for a week’s residence with the informers during the summer.

## **5.1 - Chapter Five: Analysis**

In this section, we are going to critically analyse the results within the context of the literature, which will provide the link between the research results and conclusions arising out of the research. We will begin by firstly offering our own perspective on the research; interesting trends arising, what surprised the author, amongst other insights.

Next, we will link our research results within the literature review. We will analyse whether the literature correlates with our results, if there were any similarities or differences. Further to this, we will link the relevance of specific concepts to the literature. We will also add in 'new' relevant literature to better explain our research findings.

## **5.2 - Research in Context with the Author**

As clear from the findings, many different themes and clusters emerged when documenting the data. As the two groups had fundamental differences, the expectations were wholly different; group one, as a centre for youth with physical and mental disabilities was dissimilar to the prospects of the disadvantaged youth service. However, as NEAR FM is a community radio station, their services reflected the needs of the groups they were working with.

For example, this can be potently reflected by the different trainings the groups received; as group two felt disenfranchised coming from a lower socio economic area, NEAR recognized, in liaison with the youth coordinators, that the most effective service they could offer was to build self-confidence, self-esteem and independency skills. Their program in turn was built around this; the including of vox pops, taking control of their work.

Contrasted to this, the focus with group one was building practical skills for independence. Beginning with getting public transport, during their training they were taught interview skills, how to speak for the media and overcoming fear.

This process allowed the group to have a voice in their community that they wouldn't have otherwise had.

Also from analysing the findings, there is a strong sense of equality and respect shown to each participant. With my questions drafted towards this topic, the participants did not mention discrimination or disrespectfulness. The volunteers at the radio station treated all trainees with dignity. This demonstrates the organisation fully acts on its policy programming.

On a deeper, philosophical level, NEAR FM offered two major features. Firstly, it offered meaning to the trainees' lives. This can be most potently demonstrated by a participant of group two; after his participation with the program, he went onto grow an affinity for the media and wants to pursue it as a career. The program also offered purpose for the trainees. They were able to be in an intellectual environment where they were surrounded by like-minded people and building healthy relationships with both the informers and fellow trainees.

### **5.3 - Research in Context with the Literature**

The research results in context with the literature had many similarities and some differences. Compared to commercial radio, which is increasingly portraying a "standardised world of consumerism", the philosophy of NEAR strongly correlates with that of Wired FM (Lynch, 2003). With their strong ideology of "increasing the access and participation of the wider community", particularly of those disadvantaged in some way, the two stations are comparable. Similarly to Wired, the station delivers when transforming theory into practice; exemplified by the station's announcement of an LGBT related series, both mediums work tirelessly to deliver on fully reflecting the community they inhabit.

NEAR's strong focus of inclusion was palpable from the interviews; all ages, demographics were completely welcome to partake in the program. In the truest sense, as Lynch expresses in her thesis, "community broadcasting...promotes

access and participation for all and is for community, by the community: therefore it is a democratic medium” (2003, p1). This can be said to be true for the station; as communication is defined as having a two-way flow, community radio delivers on offering a strong community link. This is in strong contrast to mainstream radio, which could be considered a dictatorship as it promotes one-way communication.

Ashling Jackson and Colm O’Doherty’s book ‘Community Development in Ireland’ is also a relevant book to analyse the findings (Jackson & O’Doherty, 2012). In the book, they outline the benefits of community engagement, which overlap strongly with my findings. They state the purpose of community development is “to improve people’s social and emotional well-being” (2012, p.6). In all the different themes I documented through the thematic analysis, all of them were trying to build an individual that is content and independent with a positive outlook through social emancipation.

Correlated with my findings, they elaborate on the three main features of community development that enable well-being in individuals. Firstly, and a strong part of my findings, is the role of self-determination; a working definition of the term is “the power or ability to make a decision for oneself without influence from the outside” (Collins English Dictionary, 2014). In the book, the author states positive value is assigned to people acting for themselves as opposed to “having things done for or to them” (2012, p.11). Documented in my research, the role of independence was paramount; it allowed the trainees to function better in society, and slowly begin to learn self-efficacy.

In the findings, I document how relationships are formed which creates positive intimacy between the participants and helps develop healthy relationships. As the second strand of how community development improves well-being, collaborative action “generates purposeful collective action” (2012, p.11). In reference to the groups analysed, it is through collective action that they began to take control over their conditions and circumstances, which in turn lead to

positive social change. As Zygmunt Bauman notes in his book, “most control can be gained only collectively” (Zygmunt, 2001, p.149).

And most relevant to my results, he states that the combination of these two principles leads to the equitable distribution of power and resources in the community. As stated in my findings, what the informants appreciated most about NEAR was the inclusion of usually disadvantaged communities into mainstream society. Through their own collective efforts, this engagement ensures that people as members of a geographical location are treated fairly and equally (2012, p12).

There are also relevant theoretical frameworks I’ve learned throughout my core classes that are pertinent to my results. In my class entitled Effecting Social Change in second year with Dr Ciarán Dunne, social cognitive theory is a relevant framework that can be applied. The concept posits that we learn from our peers and environment, which will ‘denormalize’ certain behaviours and lead individuals to change their attitudes (Bandura, 1977). With a stronger relevance to group two, it can be applied as it emphasises the importance of self-efficacy in changing behaviour. Extending off this, the process of being rewarded for their behaviour, the model states it will be repeated through vicarious learning.

And one of the most pertinent theories from Dr Dunne’s class was social exchange theory; this concept outlines the notion that humans seek out mutually beneficial exchanges in order to improve their situation. It includes the exchange of both tangible and intangible benefits received from participation (Smith & Mackie, 2006). In reference to the participants of NEAR FM, intangible benefits received could include a sense of self-confidence from being involved in the program. On the part of NEAR FM, intangible benefits include developing a community of broader equality and representation.

#### **5.4 - Summary**

It is clear that there are many positive elements NEAR FM has delivered on. As discussed in the literature review, not for profit organisations today are having a difficult time expressing their worth to investors. In the conclusion, we will discuss how this information can be translated for stakeholders and further possible areas of study.



## **6.1 - Chapter Six: Conclusion**

This study aimed to understand and identify the impact NEAR FM has on the North Side of Dublin through the lens of Social Return on Investment. Through this process, we identified the key areas and indicators that the community radio station is delivering on, specifically in relation to disadvantaged communities.

As can be seen, there are numerous benefits of community media in society. These range from a greater distribution of equality and resources spread throughout society. It allows people of previously disadvantaged communities to have a voice, to discuss their lives and experiences and to openly investigate issues they feel are important to them.

In terms of impact, NEAR FM also empowered the groups that they liaised with. They established self-confidence, a feeling of worth and self esteem; all aspects of creating an independent, healthy individual in today's society.

As discussed in chapter two, as part of the SROI process, NEAR FM can gather our research findings and present the advantages of their work to social investors. In terms of funding, this will be helpful to fully portray the benefit non-profit, social, communal organisations do for culture and society.

## **6.2 - Limitations of the Findings and Recommendations for Further Study**

As this was my first time devising a significant study, there are some limitations to be wary of. Firstly, as this is a large topic with many different elements and links and only a certain amount of time, it can be seen as limiting.

Also, as SROI and community media are relatively new topics with developing fields, a lack of familiarity should be taken into account. It was not always possible to obtain the most pertinent of resources, which affected the limitations of the research.

Also, the lack of literary sources relating to the field of community media should be noted. The inclusion of disadvantaged groups was minimally documented in scholarly articles. Extending this, there was a deficiency of relevant sources for community engagement programs; what they are and what they serve in the community. From analysing my research, this is an aspect my dissertation could aim to serve.

In reference to further study of this topic, we did not consider the impact community radio has apart from youth groups and people with mental and physical disabilities. It would be interesting to note the impact NEAR FM, and other community radio stations, have had with other groups; including, refugees, the travelling community, elderly people, amongst other perceived disadvantaged groups.

Also, another further area of study could be the impact of other communal media, specifically community television. As my research purely documented radio, it would be intriguing to understand the differences, the similarities and themes that would arise from that study.

### **6.3 - Conclusion**

Overall, throughout this study we have represented the impact the community radio station NEAR FM had on the north side of Dublin. We began by opening with our introduction, where we explained our rationale for the subject and why it was important to the author. We continued into chapter two by analysing and critically appraising the relevant literature. With our methodology, we set out to fully exploit how we were going to collect, analyse and use the data. In our findings and analysis, we observed different recurring themes developing in the research and referred them to the larger body of literature.

Overall, as we have shown, there have been many beneficial impacts of NEAR FM on the north side of Dublin.

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## **8.0 - Appendices**

### **8.1 - Appendix A - Interview Guide for Key Informants**

1. Please tell me about when your organisation first got involved with Near Media.
2. Could you please outline what your participants have been doing in the Near Media Cooperative? What skills have they learnt, what have they been doing, etc.?
3. Why did your organisation initially decide to get involved with the Near media group?
4. How have the participants found their experiences with the organisation, in terms of gaining a sense of community?
5. Overall, have your dealings with the organisation been wholly positive or negative? Elaborate.
6. What has your interaction with the Near Media staff been like?
7. How have the participants benefited, or otherwise, from their experiences with the organisation?
8. As a service to different organisations, would you recommend Near Media Cooperative? If yes or no, please elaborate on your choice.
9. How would you recommend improving the interaction with Near Media Cooperative?



## **8.2 - Appendix B - Interview Guide for Participants**

1. Please tell me about your first experience with NEAR media
2. Could you please outline what you have been doing in NEAR media? What skills you have learnt, etc?
3. How have you found your experience with the organisation, in terms of gaining a sense of community?
4. Overall, have your experiences with the organisation been wholly positive or negative?
5. What has your interaction with the NEAR media staff been like?
6. How have you benefitted, or otherwise, from your experience with NEAR media?
7. As a service, would you recommend NEAR media? If yes or no, please elaborate on your choice.
8. How would you recommend improving your interaction with NEAR media?

### 8.3 - Appendix D - Ethical Clearance Form



#### Undergraduate Research Ethics Approval Form

Student Name	Jack O'Dea		
Programme	BA in Contemporary Culture and Society	10342771	Year 4
Supervisor	Dr. Maria Loftus		
Module Co-ordinator	Dr. Agn�s Maillot		

#### STUDENT DECLARATION

I have read and understood DCU's Ethical Guidelines and I will not engage in primary research until I have received ethical clearance.

Student Signature		Date	
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#### Notes relating to the submission of form

- Submit one signed hard, typed copy of this form and send a copy with attachment to your supervisor via email.
- Append draft informed consent letters, proposed questionnaire/survey or any other instrument, interview questions and/or topics to this form.
- Do not commence primary research until your supervisor had confirmed that ethical clearance has been granted for this research.
- All forms must be signed

#### DISSERTATION / PROJECT DETAILS

<b>Project Title</b>	What impact does NEAR FM have on the North Side of Dublin in terms of Social Return on Investment?
<b>Description of research</b>	My research entails discovering the impact of NEAR FM on the North Side of Dublin. My study will comprise reviewing relevant literature, studies and reports. As I aim to understand the impact of the station, I will apply the most pertinent research method to ensure it is as effective as possible.

<p><b>Proposed Method [i]</b></p>	<p>As my study is qualitative, it will involve observing and documenting the participants experiences and perspectives. The interviews will be semi structured, with an interview guide created with clear objectives and aims. I plan to interview two groups of five people each. One from each group will be a key informant, the rest being participants of the NEAR FM training program.</p> <p>The possible groups to be interviewed will be identified by NEAR FM; I will then organise meetings with the key informant. I propose the interviews will take two hours per group. I will use an audio recorder to collect data. Following this, I will transcribe interviews and use a thematic content analysis to build the findings and analysis.</p>
<p><b>Ethical Implications [ii]</b></p>	<p>To respect confidentiality and anonymity, I will assure interviewees that the information they supplement will be kept confidential. I will keep the records of interview in an inaccessible place.</p> <p>I will also inform the participants that their identity will not be included in the study. This is to ensure the participants are fully aware of all information revolving around the study.</p>
<p><b>Experience and Skills of the Researcher [iii]</b></p>	<p>Over my years as a DCU undergraduate, I have completed several interviews that will aid me during this process. Through my experience, I have the knowledge to act appropriately with participants. I will approach each interviewee with respect and dignity. If at any time they feel uncomfortable, the interview will be terminated.</p>

[i] Provide a brief description of your methodology; include details of participant profile and how participants will be approached and informed consent sought. Provide details of data collection methods, description of tasks that participants will be asked to complete and the expected time commitment involved.

[ii] Describe the ethical implications (if any) of your research and the steps taken by you to protect participants.

[iii] Provide a brief description of your own skills and experience which will enable you to engage in this research

#### 8.4.1 – Appendix E - Transcripts

#### 8.4.2 - Transcript of Group One, Key Informant A

**Location:** Mental and Physical Rehabilitation Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Key Informant interview – identified as A

Jack O’Dea (JOD): So, could you please tell me about yourself and how you got involved in your position at this organisation?

A: The program operates from anywhere from one to three years in length and our profile of students would be early school leavers with mild to moderate learning disabilities and somewhat physical disabilities. And their age would be 16 to 20, 21. The whole aim of the program would equip students with independent skills, life skills, and we offer them FETAC level three modules, individual modules. And then when they finish the program with us we refer them onto other agencies so the likes of Killester College, National Learning Network, and further education pathways. And also we have our own FETAC SOLAS program under FÁS here, so some students would go on to that. So as part of the program a number of years back as part of rehabilitative training here we have forged a link with NEAR FM up in Coolock. And we have successfully been running a radio series with them for the last number of years entitled CRC talks. We’ve done three radio series to date which were very successful and did one TV series with NEAR TV, which was also very good, and which was also entitled CRC Talks TV. So the trainees have got an awful lot out of it over the years, the sort of partnerships then comes back to a trainer that used to work here going back to 1999 and 2000, when we first set up the link with NEAR FM in Coolock, through Jack Byrne who set it up originally. And we just did broadcast training at first, then the sort of link diminished a bit and then we reignited the whole thing back in 2006, 2007, and that’s when we put a plan together to produce a radio series with the trainees.

JOD – 56 secs: So that was a couple of years that you established the radio show, the link was 1999 with Jack.

A: That’s right yeah, then we spent a couple of years doing some training in media training. We brought students up to them in early 2000’s, went for a various different reasons, the link went. Then it was re-established again circa 2006, 2007, and then we put a plan together, a proposal, to actually come up with our own radio show. It was going to be a multi magazine show at first, but it developed then into a series. The first series we did ten shows, the CRC talks one

which was really successful. We scaled it down a bit for two, it was eight. And the last series, CRC Series three talks, was five programs.

JOD - 2 39secs: And in each program, what would you be dealing with exactly?

SC: The topics were (...) primarily coming from the ideas of the trainees themselves. They were doing media access class as part of the program here. And that class was for instance every Thursday afternoon from two to four. And luckily enough we were able to secure the studio up in NEAR FM between those times. So even though we weren't doing production or planning for our series, we were actually up there doing training, interview skills, and introduction to radio and broadcasting. So it was really, really good. So the topics stem from them, obviously with a bit of guidance from teachers here, trainers. And a bit of brain storming. And they came up with different areas, for instance one was about sports and disabilities. One whole program on that. Another one was all about cultural arts, which we brought in a drama teacher here Cormac Walsh, which has been very successful in setting up drama production. We've had various plays in a drama program. We've had an arts program as well because we have got a great link with Dublin City Council in the Red Stables down in St Anne's. And they allow us to use a space every week as well for doing art projects. And we were involved with the Five Lamps project every year as well under Dublin City Council. The students produced work, put the work in for a show in that project. So we did a whole program all about arts as well. Another program we done was in around transport and access, and all about the difficulties encountered by wheelchair users, people with disabilities. Travelling with public transport in and around Dublin city. That was a very successful program as well. And then all about jobs and employability. And trying to get people with disabilities into mainstream work force. There has been various programs, that's just to name but a few now.

JOD - 4 20secs: Yeah, different drama to five lamps, it's wonderful. So you kind of went through it there, but Jack approached you and you said the link in 1999, why did your organisation fit in with NEAR media?

A: We found out about NEAR FM back in that era, as I said it was another trainer who used to work here and then I came on-board in around that same time as well. 1999, 2000. And I sort of took it on from there. And there was a man who made the link up there, can't remember his name, Joe Tate I think, I think he worked up there at that time. And then I got to know Ciaran, the station manager, and we had the link up and at first in those early days it was just training. We were just going up for interview skills and introduction to media and broadcasting. And then we re-established the link, I said as I did in 2006, 2007. And then we came up with that idea and proposal with Ciaran. And another

assistant up there called Paul Lochran, a key player in the whole thing in the early stages, and he sort of produced the shows for us and had some assistance from CEE workers. And one of our students here who was on the program Andrew Reed came through our program and came through the CRC he actually successfully got a work placement up there, for work experience. Then he went on to a CEE scheme. And now he produces his own shows up in NEAR FM and he's still a key player. And he's been assisting our recent production, and it's a great role model for the students, because he's still in his twenties, and he's got a disability himself and it's great for him to be showing all the new trainees coming on board what to do, how to do it, and it is a great role model.

JOD – 6 02secs: So you kind of went through it there, but the participants are obviously having a really beneficial experience, you said before they really enjoy going up. So how has their experience overall been with NEAR?

A: Very positive. Really positive. Just from even, we do sometimes use a mini bus to get up there, sometimes they'd be using public transport so the training sort of starts from there because a lot of the students wouldn't be used to travelling alone, or travelling as small group in public transport. So that's a learning experience in itself. And getting to the place. Most people were never in a studio before, or a radio station and it's a big learning curve for all, and a bit of an eye opener but usually, 99% of students takes to it very well and very positive. The learning is two fold, you've got literacy coming into play there as well, improving that, you've got numeracy skills. You've got the whole thing of confidence building, self esteem. It really, really transforms people and the classic example of that would be Andrew Reed who as I said came from this training program and went on to work experience and is now producing his own shows up there.

JOD – 7 10secs: And so overall, I think you've said it, has your experience been wholly positive or negative?

A: Absolutely positive yeah, it's been great. NEAR FM have been so supportive, and it's a great community partnership and community link. We're a charity; they're a voluntary community radio station and one of the biggest in the country I believe. And it's just great to have that partnership enforced, and it really gives people with disabilities a voice which you wouldn't normally see on mainstream radio, which is improving these days but a few years ago it wasn't. So it's great to have them on a community format, on that platform where they can voice their own opinions and experiences.

JOD – 7 42secs: And you talk about the staff, Joe Tate, Jack and Ciaran. Have you found the staff easy to work with?

A: Absolutely. They've been bending over backwards to help us. They've been very very supportive of us, especially Ciaran Murray and Paul Lochran, been really really key with developing the whole thing. So (...) it's been a great experience to date.

JOD – 8 12secs: And as a service to other organisations, would you recommend it?

A: Absolutely, yeah. There has been a couple. I think with the success of the CRC series talks, the radio series, and the TV, the TV series was shown on DCCV on UPC 802, that channel there. It got quite a wide viewership. And then the radio series got a lot of listeners, so it sort of developed from there. And we had other organisations sort of linking in and asking us how did we get on from our experience, and I think the IWA, the Irish Wheelchair Association are involved now as well and St Michael's House I believe have linked in as well. So it is expanding.

JOD – 8 45 secs: It's getting more and more popular. And is there anything you would do to improve the link between you and NEAR media?

A: No, no. Just access to more funding would be great because obviously to produce series in mainstream radio and TV costs. So easier access to funding would be the only thing. We succeeded in successfully achieving funding through the Broadcasting Association of Ireland, the BAI, and we were under the Sound and Visions Scheme, and that's where we got our funding from. And that's worked out very well. We were very advantaged and lucky to get three rounds of funding with them, which doesn't happen too often.

JOD – 9 25: I think that's it, that's perfect. Thank you.

### **8.4.3 - Transcript of Group One, Participant B**

**Location:** Mental and Physical Rehabilitation Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Participant interview – identified as B

Jack O’Dea (JOD): Can you tell me about first experience with NEAR media, and how you guys found it.

B: It was all right like, grand.

JOD: When was the first time you went up to NEAR?

B: Last year.

JOD: How did you find you first time up there?

B: Grand, was easy.

JOD: What exactly did you guys do?

B: Talking about buses and all, the train.

JOD: What aspect of it?

B: Talking about you know the way the luas closes really early, the train, the doors.

JOD: Patrick was saying you learnt how to interview, and how to use your voice. How’d you find that?

B: Bit hard. Tough talking in radio, saying you’re on radio and everything.

JOD: So you did the interviewing and the transport. Is there anything else you guys did?

B: We were talking about the drama. We done an interview with Cormac and the woodwork teacher, Patrick. See what do they do before they came here.

JOD: Yeah because Patrick’s doing a show isn’t he?

B: Yeah he’s doing Dracula.



JOD: So you did the interviewing then. What aspect of it did you do, did you use microphones and stuff?

B: Yeah we had to talk in a different room, me and Patrick last year. You know the way there's a microphone and you had to go to a separate room to do an interview, and talked about buses and all. That's what me and Patrick did last year.

JOD: So you used some of the equipment then?

B: Yeah.

JOD: Okay great, thanks B; that's all we need from for you now.

#### **8.4.4 - Transcript of Group One, Participant C**

**Location:** Mental and Physical Rehabilitation Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Participant interview – identified as C

Jack O’Dea (JOD): If you could tell me your first experience with NEAR media, and when that was, and all that type of thing.

C: It was last year.

JOD – 2 32secs: So with drama – you were doing that with Cormac?

C: I remember asking the experience with doing drama, asking if there’s anybody who had done it before or would like to do it. What would be good advice for them.

JOD: Because Cormac was here before wasn’t he? How’d you find him?

C: Yeah, he’s actually really good doing the drama. I picked the drama because I’ve done it for such a long time.

JOD: So you go up on a Thursday?

C: Yeah.

JOD: So when you’re in NEAR, do you use the equipment, the microphones, and stuff like that?

C: I think the rest of them might be nervous, but I might just say to them, just don’t be nervous, just pretend the audience is in their underwear. Pretend they’re not there.

JOD: And I hear that’s what Cormac goes through – talk into the microphone, you might get nervous but they teach you how to overcome that. Did you find that useful?

C: I remember the first time I did it I actually got stage fright, and then after a few years I got used to it and didn’t get stage fright anymore.

JOD: And do you find other people in the group find that difficult?

C: Yeah, and I have more experience than them.

JOD: So overall it seems you really enjoyed yourself.

C: Yeah, in the future I'd like to perform on bigger stages.

JOD: Okay, great. I think that's all we need from you now, thanks.

#### **8.4.5 - Transcript of Group One, Participant D**

**Location:** Mental and Physical Rehabilitation Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Participant interview – identified as D

Jack O’Dea (JOD): Tell me about your first experience with NEAR FM.

D: I was a bit nervous. It was hard to answer questions at first, then I got to used to it.

JOD: So, what exactly did you do when you were down there?

D: We were interviewing different people, like transport, luas. People from the IWA.

JOD: And they taught you different things as well didn’t they? What did they teach you?

D: How to answer a long question, to answer the question longer.

JOD: Do you feel like you’ve learnt a lot from going to NEAR? What have you learnt?

P: Yeah, this is my second year doing radio. You can show other people how you feel on the radio.

JOD: What did you think was so great about it?

D: You can show new people how to use the radio and [you’re] shown how to interview different people. You’re told how to speak up loud, not low. I was sort of shy.

JOD: That’s great. That’s something you learnt there and can use for the rest of your life. Is there anything else you’d like to say about NEAR, both good and bad?

D: We were shortlisted this year for our radio [show]. We had to go into these three judges and tell them what we did over the years. Then we were invited to this radio thing. And it was all different people from different centres, and a few people had an organisation. There was one FAI group. Like they showed people how to play for Ireland and show them their experience. We didn’t win it this year but we’ll hopefully win it next year.

JOD: And so you’re in NEAR every week?

D: It's every Thursday. We go up at 1 45 to 4 30. We're told what we're doing. At the moment we're interviewing two people, Cormac the drama teacher. They're putting on a show this year, Dracula.

JOD: Do you find the people up at NEAR friendly?

D: Yeah, we met a girl named Aoife. And a guy named Andrew. He shows us how to present ourselves, how to not be afraid to use the mic. And don't put yourself down.

D: Okay, great thank you. That's all we need for now.

### **8.5.1 - Transcript of Group Two, Key Informant A**

**Location:** Youth Service Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Key Informant interview – identified as A

A: Just to let you know, Sphere 17 is the regional youth service for Dublin 17. And this is the regional centre, so we're kind of the main building, kind of thing. And there's two satellite centres. One is actually just behind there, behind NEAR FM at the back. And the other one is off at Priorswood, and they'd be exactly the same, just a smaller building and smaller teams.

We all work with ten to twenty one year olds, and we just do all kinds of stuff. We do need based programs, activities. Interest based programs and activities. One to one group work, all kinds of stuff. We liaise with the schools, couple of justice workers that are working through the guards, kind of thing. So there's loads going on, but..

JOD - 50 secs: Loads of people come in here and help out in different ways, younger people ten to twenty one years old obviously...

A: Yeah, yeah. Basically we just support young people with growing up, yeah. It varies a lot, we can work with say ten to twelve year olds just on their social skills on behaviour issues, and anxieties about going into secondary school. And also it's a great place just for that kind of age group to make friends, and be active and be healthy.

JOD - 1 19secs: Keep doing things.

A: Yeah, yeah.

JOD: I'm only from Portmarnock, but I've only been to Darndale a handful of times I'd say.

A - 1 28 secs: And then some of the age group we worked with tonight have worked well for a long time, some of that age group would be more working around trying to get them into employment or college or courses,

JOD - 1 38 secs: Yeah for their education and stuff...

A: But it's good yeah. So how do you know NEAR FM then?

JOD - 1 42secs: Basically, there's this chap in DCU, he's like a knowledge broker because I wasn't sure what to do my dissertation on. There was just so many ideas, I wasn't really sure. So this guy came in and said these are the different

things that need to be researched in the community, if you want to do these. So NEAR FM wanted to do some research regarding the involvement they've had with their community, and has it beneficial to Coolock. And he told this guy Brian that, and then he come to us, and does anybody want to research this for them. And I was like yeah it'd be very interesting to find that out, find out what they've been doing, projects they've been doing, stuff like that. And the other projects were about community involvement with Darndale, another one I think is in a school, she's asking the students, I cant remember what the question is, and there's a fourth one which I cant remember. But there's four of doing different things around the north side of Dublin, with community involvement.

A - 2 32 secs: NEAR FM is a brilliant organisation. As long as doing projects along side my work here, I'd be kind of involved as a volunteer myself. It's just a super set up.

JOD: So you're the person who set up everything, with NEAR FM. Did they come to you? Was it Ciaran you were working with?

A - 2 52secs: Initially there was a lad called Paul Lochran, and I initially (..) met Paul. I actually don't know who initially approached who. But I used to bring up just a few young people for tours of the place and eventually it lead to

JOD: Proper programming?

A - 3 15: On the side of that I became a volunteer on my own time, and that kind of helped.

JOD: So does the group go up every week or something?

A: Well at the moment there's nobody going up. What happened is, we used to take up small groups and give them a tour and go see things, have a play on the desk, do mock interviews, it'd be a laugh and a wonderful activity. We did that for a good while, and people showed an interest, the 15 year olds and all the teenagers. They showed an interest in it. We first took a group, and did a kind of youth volunteer training course with them, and this small group of about five did that. And a couple of them actually went on to do a program on Saturday morning, which was a great success. It didn't last too long, but it was a great success. And one of them is here tonight, Jamie, and he's keen to come in and have a chat with you.

4:06 secs: and afterwards, we did it again. And next time we put in a funding proposal, and we had a small group of about five or six, that actually came into the training and made five programs.

JOD: About what? Just kind of?

A - 4 18secs: We did five programs. All were like youth related, one on bullying, one on relationships, one on cigarettes and alcohol, one on role models and aspirations, and one on youth and community.

JOD: So kind of relevant issues to their lives.

A: Yeah, and they basically just had talk shows, all had roles, producers.

JOD: And did it kind of vary around, one would produce one time, and did other things?

A - 4 39: Yeah they kind of rotated them, some of them preferred different ones.

JOD: They all got the best maximum.

A: Yeah and you know it was really good fun, and when we did that we used to go up every week and did a big launch. But for the last good number of months we've not done anything. It comes in waves; sometimes you'll suddenly get a group of kids

JOD: ... who are really keen on it.

A: Yeah or just interested in that kind of stuff, then we'll go, you know.

JOD 5 02 secs: So how long did it go on for. You said they went there initially, and then met the group. How long were they for?

A: The group that made the five programs, that program would have went on for months, I don't know maybe four months, five months. It was something like every Wednesday afternoon, for like five months. We didn't do the editing; it was done by NEAR FM at the end. So then a few months later when it was edited, we had a launch here.

We're actually planning it, it's in the pipeline, I'm actually really behind on it. I want to do a monthly Saturday morning program with young people. We work one Saturday a month, and we usually do a breakfast club, and the idea of what I want to do is I would go up to NEAR with a different group each week, and just



do an hour round table discussion on young person issues. And the other staff would be at the breakfast club and the radio program would be on live, while the rest are having their brekkie playing pool. That's the plan, I actually hope, well, I actually planned to start that in January but it's like April now.

JOD - 6 28secs: Okay, I just have a list of questions. So you went through what they done, maybe you could just go through why they got involved, was it beneficial to their lives?

A: Why did they get involved, or why did we get involved?

JOD: Yeah, why was the link set up between Sphere 17 and NEAR? More so them I'd say, them.

A: Well, I mean, young people would come into us, the vast majority are anyway, come in voluntarily. And whether they ask for or we identify it they're coming in for some sort of support. And often that support might come manifest itself through conversation or banter or chitchat or all kinds of stuff. And we would tend to run programs that young people are interested in. That then any issues would come out through relationships being built during the program. So like at the start of say that program that I said ran for four or five months, we would have known them young people a little bit, so as well as them learning through these months different skills about the radio and developing their social skills, and interpersonal skills by gaining experience from being in a different organisation, and what have you, team work and working with and interviewing people, why that's going on, I would work together would also be building these healthy relationships with the young people so then when issues arise about say looking for jobs, getting out of college, things that have gone on at home, issues about health, mental health, physical health, anything, we'd be in a better position for the young people to approach us or for us to approach them and all that kind of stuff. And then NEAR FM being an organisation that's community based that wants the outreach, it was like the perfect environment for us to work together and kind of do that.

JOD - 8 41secs: And how did you find your interaction with the staff there?

A: No super like. I'd probably be biased, as I've been quite heavily involved with NEAR over the years but they are really kind of approachable.

JOD: Even for the people here as well?

A: Yeah, I mean when we were going up bringing the young people initially, they would have been very aware that like that we work with young people, and they

would have been like well what do you want to do, and how can we best assist you and help you. So yeah, as well as just wanting to bring young people up to NEAR, NEAR wanted us to bring young people up to NEAR as well. We were always made to feel welcome, and that it was a place of learning and development, just as this is.

JOD - 9 35secs: And is there anything you'd recommend to improve the link between the two?

A: No, no, I mean if anything, the things you'd be looking to recommend would be things we can't necessarily do. It's more things about (..) what NEAR is about you kind of get the jist of what community is and what community radio is and community media. Through being involved with it, and being there. Participating. So that's what young people would learn from participating there. But the general kind of ethos of community, and community as a concept, is pretty hard to grasp. By anyone, especially young people. And especially by young people that may not have strong literacy skills, or not particularly great self-esteem. But them kind of obstacles are a whole different thing. You know they're something that me and NEAR can sit down and need to do this, and this. The main things were that in order to train in order to learn the technical aspects and everything in NEAR, some of our young people were challenged with their everyday challenges. Like literacy skills, but that's the nature why we're here. We're in a community where young people do have like a lot of challenges, a lot of at risks circumstances.

JOD - 11 13secs: I think you've really went through it, but your feelings have been wholly positive obviously?

A: Yeah, no honestly, honestly like. Every couple of months we do our planning, and every year we plan the year and every so many months we plan a new term. And NEAR it's always we go is there anything. The last couple of months there hasn't been any groups, that have like jumped out at me, you know. Apart from this Saturday but that's just me, way behind.

When the summer comes as well now, I'll probably start taking up small little groups as well for a tour. Do you know like, you've been in there and all. The tour's so simple, we show them the studios, and we go and see everything, get them talking, and we just love it.

JOD: So when you go in, you have a look around, but you don't do much editing?

A - 12 10 secs: No we don't cause editing's very complicated, and its very time consuming and its very intricate. The editings also something that isn't as engaging

JOD: Yeah it's not very community focussed, you're by yourself

A: Yeah it's more so a task, that needs to be done. You don't get as much learning out of it. The learning that you get is specific for editing. The participation and the laughs (...) have been around that.

JOD: Listen, I think we've got everything we need there. Thanks a million.

### **8.5.2 - Transcript of Group Two, Key Informant B**

**Location:** Youth Service Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Key Informant interview – identified as B

Jack O’Dea (JOD): Tell me about your experience and time meeting NEAR media, and how the link was created.

B: Ehm, yeah, so first of all, when we went up to NEAR FM we brought a group and went up a few times with lots of different groups, to just show them NEAR FM. Explain them the bit about community radio, and got to mess around, the mics and talk, and record stuff. So that was great. Just to say about NEAR FM, for me, I just found it, (...) they were completely on the same page as us in so far as their approach and their values and they were just a really warm welcoming place as well [sic].

JOD - 54 secs: Do you want to elaborate on that, how they were on the same page as you?

B: So, I suppose, we would come from a place we would always look at our young people as recognizing they have loads of potential and loads of talent but also some challenges that they face. And I just found that the staff in NEAR FM completely got that. I mean whenever we might work with other agencies in lots of different ways the guards, the residence association, whatever it might be, we mightn’t always be on the same page. I just found that NEAR FM completely understood what our view was, had the same approach as us, was always really warm and welcoming, nice safe place. They were always really good with how they interacted with our young people, their approach, brilliant.

JOD - 1 39secs: That makes it so much easier for you guys and them together.

B: Absolutely yeah, we’re both singing from the same hymn sheet really do you know.

JOD: So your first time then the link was established, when was it established?

B: A good while ago, it could even be two years. The first initial contact. So we worked with them really on that program.

JOD: Okay, so just go back to that. The manager made the initial contact?

B: He made the initial contact with them, so he would have met them with some of their staff members, and said how can we work together. So it was initially let's bring some young people, just show them around and from that we said let's see if we can make some programs. So, (...) we trained some of our young people up and they ran a Saturday talk show by themselves where we eventually stepped back and let them run it. So they met up themselves, went up there and ran a weekly Saturday show which ended up them going up and completely running it themselves. Now they've come in to us during the week either to use the building for them to meet up and get some support around ideas, and stuff. That was one program that we ran. And then another program that we ran was the program Story it was called where a group of our young people sat down and decided on young people issues. Things that they felt were relevant to them and they designed a program each of them. So it might be like young people in the community, drugs and alcohol, sex and relationships, that type of stuff. They designed programs on each one of those issues.

JOD - 3 24 secs: So one show each?

B: So one show each. I think there was like, can't really remember, might have been six, six shows. And each of them chose a different topic.

JOD: So it'd be an hour long?

B: It'd be an hour long.

JOD: And they made everything themselves?

B: Yeah they basically did. We were there as a support, but we basically let them design it and choose what guest speakers they got in to talk about. Even down to the music that they played, they tried to choose music that was relevant to the issue. You know like cigarettes and alcohol, a song by Oasis might have been the opening tune for the drugs and alcohol one, you know what I mean.

And then like after it (...) a show here where the young people came in where their shows were played, they were presented with some awards, pictures were taken. Snippets of the shows to come were played in sphere 17 and everyone was invited in to hear it.

JOD: That's lovely isn't it?

B: It was, and you know what was so lovely about it as well; it was basically, it became this nice, safe, place where young people basically the record button was

pressed in NEAR FM, but it was basically them discussing stuff that was relevant to them, and they got to challenge each other, they opened up.

JOD - 5 00 secs: In an atmosphere that is safe, where they can speak it and not feel threatened in any way.

B: absolutely. I know for one of the issues, with the sex and relationship show, a lot of the girls might have come up with some preconceived notions around boys only want girls with big asses and big tits. That was some of their things, but the lads on the program were like no it's not just this, we also want someone we can talk to and that's kind and blah and blah.

JOD: So they challenged notions...

B: Themselves.

JOD: Without you having to come in, they worked out themselves.

B: They done that all themselves in their own space, and it all just happened to be recorded for the radio you know.

JOD - 5 41 secs: So in offering them different skills and viewpoints, that was obviously one thing, but what else learned from their experience?

B: Ehm, I also think they got a better idea about what community radio is about. And (...) besides from everything else, it built their confidence as well. A real confidence booster. Some of the young people that took part in that program didn't necessarily engage in sphere 17 on a weekly basis or come in to the drop ins. But they always showed up for the NEAR FM programs. So the young people we wouldn't necessarily have as much contact with, but this was just a very unique, specific program that they got involved in and enjoyed you know.

JOD - 6 27 secs: And then the staff; how'd you find them to deal with? In terms of, just in general?

B: Brilliant. Brilliant. Just really helpful, and they were able to have a bit of banter with the kids as well. And kind of just get down to their level in a lot of ways you know.

JOD: They're on the same page as you as well. Yeah, the volunteers are very approachable. They want to achieve the same thing as Sphere 17.

B: I think it was nice for our young people to hear the NEAR FM staff as well that (...) in our media generally speaking we never get to hear young people, their views on things, their voice represented at all. We're interested in what you have to say and it's important and we don't hear it enough, you know, they were kind of like yeah we do have something to say, you know, we are interesting, and we have points, and we want to be heard. And they were.

JOD: That's what the manager said. That with the show, anybody could relate to it, anywhere, it wasn't just people from a certain area. It was all young people.

B: Yeah actually that's a really good point. That's true yeah.

JOD: It wasn't just limited to just an area or whatever, anybody can relate to an issue about relationships.

B: Just being a teenager.

JOD: Yeah just being a teenager in general, it doesn't matter where you're from.

B: Yeah that's true actually, that's another thing. Trying to think of anything else they gained from it. I suppose as well there was friendships formed. They weren't all necessarily a group of friends that we got. So one or two people might have been friends, they all have a group friendship from it. And became friends on Facebook, and all that kind of stuff. It was for one or two of the groups, from the NEAR FM thing. And it was a directly result from the program with NEAR FM felt more comfortable knowing us and knowing the service that they came in more. Two of them ended up going on a residential with us for the week, went away for a week with us in the summer. And it was directly because of their participation in the NEAR FM program. Yeah so that's really good as well you know.

JOD: Listen, I think that's all we need. Thanks a million.

### **8.5.3 - Transcript of Group Two, Participant C**

**Location:** Youth Service Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Participant interview, identified as C

Jack O'Dea (JOD): Okay. Tell me about your first experience with NEAR media.

C: Well, I went into NEAR media with Sphere 17 and we done training and stuff like that. I kind of decided that I'd like to keep on doing radio, and (...) we got in talks with Paul from NEAR FM and me and two of my friends, Eoin and Jackie, decided that we'd try run a show, if they could find a slot. And they wanted us to do a magazine type show. So we went on every second Saturday, and that was going for about two years.

JOD: So with the training, you said you started off with that. What was training like, what did you do?

C - 56 secs: The training was just kind of showing us around the facility. Showing us how to use the equipment, just kind of explaining which equipment would be used for what. Your recording equipment and stuff like that.

JOD: Just the soundboard and stuff like that?

C: Yeah. (...) I kind of became a little genius on the soundboard.

JOD: Fair play, I don't know how to use it. There's one in DCU and I don't have a clue. It's so complicated.

C: No yeah I was the one that did all the soundboard and presented on the show that we done.

JOD: What was the show you did?

C: It was a magazine show.

JOD: What's a magazine show? Topical?

C: We'd have music and stuff like that. But we'd talk about different topics that were going on and various issues. We were getting a lot of people coming in, ringing in, and saying your show's good and all that. Really interested in it. We got a dude from the DJ school in Dublin City Centre, he came in and he was just kind of promoting the school and stuff. He came in with a piece of music that one of the students did and he was an upcoming DJ at the time. We played that, and



there was a lot of people texting in. Somebody from Waterford texted in saying it was amazing, people listening online and stuff. NEAR FM is only spread across North East Dublin, so people online wouldn't be typing in NEAR FM from the country, they wouldn't really know what NEAR FM was. So it must have been people spreading the word.

JOD: And listened to it themselves. So you said Paul was the guy who linked you. SO he just kind of taught you different things and the guy that brought you in?

C: Yeah he was the one that brought us in. Yeah there was him and Dorothy. They run the training programs.

JOD – 3 07secs: How did you find them teaching you with all the stuff?

C: Very good. They kind of give you a full guideline of what community radio is all about. You know (...) they're not paid to do whatever. It's something like 80% of their work force is volunteers. They don't get any government funding or anything like that. It's a non-profit radio station.

JOD – 3 36 secs: That produces really good content.

C: As opposed to, you know, (...) FM104, Spin 1038, their presenters are on mega bucks.

JOD: Mega stuff, so much. So yeah, you obviously enjoyed it. Would you recommend to other people to get involved, do you think you learnt a lot from going up there?

C: Yeah 100%. When I finished in NEAR FM, I found a love for media.

JOD: Really?

C: When I started in NEAR FM, I ended up joining the Mic Project in Darndale. And that's all about media production, you know, as opposed to you do a bit of communication and media analysis. You do photography, graphic design, audio engineering, film making, it's amazing. When I went into the Mic Project, I went in with an advantage because the sound desk that was in the sound engineering class was very similar to the one in NEAR FM, so I knew my way around that.

JOD – 4 49 secs: So you were obviously a pro then compared to everyone else.

C: Yeah well there was a fellow, Andrew, who took me and Jackie on. He was kind of our mentor. He didn't have to be, he just kind of took us under his wing, he was

like there's really nice people. And he even done a couple of shows, and I was covering for his co presenter and just set back and did the desk for him.

JOD: So it all started with NEAR, then you got in there and saw did different things and stuff like that. I think media is really cool, and it's great to further your skills as well by doing all the photography.

C – 6 41: But it's not all about community radio. They also do NEAR TV and they've podcasts you can relisten back to shows. And there's a live webcam on in the studio all the time. People can see what banter you're up to in the studio.  
7 23 secs - Community radio is definitely a good stepping stone if you want to get further in regards to media.

JOD: Literally because the people who were involved work in RTÉ now.

C: As soon as I said in my interview with the Mic Project about my NEAR FM experience, they were like (...) your man basically said to me after the interview "so NEAR FM, I'm pretty sure you have this".

JOD: Excellent, that's perfect. Thanks for the interview.

#### **8.5.4 - Transcript of Group Two, Participant D**

**Location:** Youth Service Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** Participant interview, identified as D

Jack O'Dea (JOD): Could you please tell me about your first experience with NEAR media?

D: Yeah it was good yeah. We had to do a (...) we were talking about all different relationships between people and whatever. And about drugs, alcohol, sex, loads of different things. It was good like.

JOD: I think there was seven or six different shows, wasn't there?

D: I think there was six. With five programs.

JOD: So you were involved with the one relationships and stuff like that.

D: Yeah.

JOD: Okay so basically, you went up, and yeah. What did you do, training and stuff like that?

D: Yeah we had to. I was one of the people recording things, taught how to use the computers and all, different keyboards and whatever. We went into town and did voxpops.

JOD: That's scary isn't it?

D: Yeah going up to people.

JOD: Yeah it's the worst, done it before. It's horrible.

D: I didn't find it to bad like, I don't mind talking to people. Pure scarlet for some of them walking by. People were just walking past and walking past saying no no no. So yeah, that was quite hard. And then there was a culture night or something in Temple Bar at that mad art yoke beside the IBEC College. Yeah, in there. Beside Charlie's. We went in there one night, we were talking like, it was live like, whatever it was, the mad summer culture night.

JOD: This was September, this was last year? Yeah I know what you're talking about, I was in town.

D - 1 29secs: We were asking one or two people questions and that was alright.

JOD: What would you ask people?

D: Are you enjoying your night, what did they come into town for exactly? Because when we were town we saw one of the fellas that worked up in NEAR FM and he was like “yeah, go on in and ask them a question” or something. So we were like, all right, one of the lads like. It was gas.

JOD: And so it was relationships, so how did you build the show? What did they teach you?

D: Well, they made us sit down in the group and talk about whatever ideas we had or whatever experiences we had. Then they’d ask us to come in here, ask a few of the young people or whoever lives on our road or whatever. Then they brought into town to do the voxpops. We got whatever we were asking off the voxpops, and we just wrote it down. And done surveys and all, we sat down then and put whatever we had to do together.

JOD: There was loads wasn’t there?

D: Yeah, and then they just said right after you’ve wrote down everything that was going to be talked about, then just done it.

JOD - 2 29secs: Then there was the training. You got training there as well?

D: Well, yeah. Basically. We didn’t really but we did. I wasn’t there for loads of it, but they taught us how to use all that mad stuff. Computers, all the mad microphones, and where they come from. I hadn’t a clue, one of the lads will tell you more.

JOD: Yeah is that Jamie?

D - 2 57secs: Yeah he did it for a while. I wasn’t doing it with him but.

JOD: He did it a couple of years ago I think, but he’s like a wizard with the media.

D: I haven’t a clue about any of it. One of them will tell you definitely.

JOD: So for the voxpop, did you use like recording stuff?

D: Yeah, yeah. We had like the machine yoke things. The microphone things yeah. We had big ones, small ones, and you know those zoom recorders.

JOD: So how long did that go on for?

D: (...) A few months, a couple of months. I don't know how many months.

JOD: It'd take quite a while wouldn't it if you're doing a whole show?

D: Yeah like it took us ages and ages to get us one program. Three, four, five weeks. I think it was from October to June, it was long like.

JOD: Yeah I did a class in it, when you see it you only think it'd take a couple of weeks.

D: When we were doing the voxpop they were all like getting offended because some people were just walking past and everyone was like. I was just like that's just life.

JOD: Yeah fairplay for getting yourself back up again. Some people are like oh God; my ego's so affected.

D: Some of them didn't want to do it again cause they were told no.

JOD: Your show's actually better though if you're like you, go off and keep getting people.

D: Oh we got a few head cases all right though. We got these two young fellas. One of the questions was like what's the three best features that you're looking for in a partner. And we got a few dirty young fellas, just very funny like. We had to listen back to it.

JOD: That's gas. So you'd ask people different questions, then you'd come back to the studio, and build it into the show. So would you kind of schedule when stuff would be playing, stuff like that?

D - 5 06secs: Yeah we would. I don't know what they're called, those mad minute intros or something, how to break it up in links and all that.

JOD: So it was technical.

D: Yeah, I hadn't a clue what was going on. I was just looking at one thing, looking at another. We had to go into this mad room with other people and all. Sound technicians, and this fella that works.

JOD: And did you put music into it?

D: Yeah we had about six songs in the whole thing. About thirty seconds of the song.

JOD: That sounds cool, I'd actually like to hear it and see how it went.

D 5 36secs: We done a mad presentation inside.

JOD: Yeah that's what everyone has been saying.

D: Everyone came in with those little key rings, mad USB yokes with the show.

JOD: The show's probably online is it?

D: I haven't a clue.

JOD: I'd be telling everybody about it, I'd be like yeah, put it on my Facebook, copy and pasting all the links.

D – 5 53secs: I don't like listening to myself back.

JOD – 6 11secs: And who taught you everything, do you remember?

D: Eh, Paul, he was only there for a couple of weeks then he left. Then there was Dorothy, some blonde haired young one.

JOD: And how'd you find them?

D: Yeah, your one was a bit hard to understand. I don't know where she was from.

JOD: Was she from Dublin?

D: No, she was from some mad country. But she shares like half of one foreign accent, then a Dublin accent. Then we had someone else, Dave, but he was cool as well. Proper sound do you know what I mean.

JOD: Helped you out with loads of stuff. And they're volunteers as well.

D: Yeah your man Paul was volunteering.

JOD – 7 05secs: I think you've answered everything, D. Anything else you want to add?

D: No thanks. I don't think so.

JOD: Thanks a million.

### **8.5.5 - Transcript of Group Two, Participant E**

**Location:** Youth Service Centre, North Dublin

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Interviewee:** – Participant interview, identified as E

Jack O’Dea (JOD): Okay, please tell me about your first experience with NEAR media.

E: Well, when I first went in it was grand; it was just real chill and everything. Like it was good at the start, then after a while, it was just like I’m not into this. This is just mad boring.

JOD – 16 secs: Why, what was boring about it?

E: I don’t know, I just thought it was real boring. It wasn’t something I’d be in to really. Like, I was up there and talking to them and everything. Then I just thought no I’m not coming up here.

JOD: Yeah. How’d you find the volunteers?

E: Oh yeah the volunteers were all great like.

JOD: So was it more just the actual activity of it?

E: Yeah like I thought it was going to be completely different sort of thing. Well as we were just talking almost all the time. Yeah just shiting out of us.

JOD: What did you think it was going to be?

E: More just doing different things. Like we were never really using the radio. Well we were using the same little speakers and all, and I thought all right I’ll go on the radio but we didn’t it was just all pre recorded sort of thing.

JOD: Okay, so you were expecting something completely different. So when did you realize oh this isn’t for me?

E - 1 03 secs: A couple of weeks in. I’d say we were there for like five weeks when I was just like no I’m not going anymore. Like they showed us how to use the little things and all, the computer so when we were making the little thing we were recording it. Like he showed us how he done it. Then he was like one of yous try that then. And then when I tried to do it was just like oh yeah I put the sound in, then I moved it into a bit of music and another bit. Like he showed us how to edit it and all, that was cool like.



JOD: How'd you find editing? Did you find it interesting?

E: Yeah that's all I wanted to do, the editing, talking on the radio.

JOD: But it was more just talking about issues?

E: Yeah talking about how you do this, what are we going to do for this one, what are we going to do for that one. More planning than actual work itself.

JOD: Where as you wanted to do the actual technical, editing stuff. So did the rest of them actually learn how to use the editing tools?

E: Yeah, I think so anyways. Everyone got a shot at everything we were doing.

JOD: Okay, so you kind of rotated, one produces, another does something else.

E: Like when we went into town doing the voxpop, that was pretty cool.

JOD - 2 22 secs: Yeah, how'd you find that?

E: Meeting all the different people. Yeah, everyone was grand about it. There was only one or two people who were like no get away from me.

JOD: The first time you do it, once you've done it the first time it gets easier.

E: To make it worse the young one I got stuck with she doesn't talk. She just doesn't talk. And she didn't open her mouth once. She tried to talk to one or two people. She was like yeah, no. I was like oh no I need someone else.

JOD: Yeah, like I need someone crazy who'll go off and talk to anyone like.

E: That's me, I went over to a load of skags, and they were all talking to each other. I was like can I interview you for the radio, and they were like yeah. One was like don't ask him though he's deaf, and he goes no ask him and I'll tell him what you said and I'll tell you what he said. So I asked him anyways, and he's like, now this is from a deaf man in Dublin city centre. And he asked us all the questions and all.

JOD - 3 10 secs - What were you asking them?

E: It was about bullying. We were asking them about relationships as well.

JOD: Did you pick your different topics? Or were they given to you?

E: No we kind of got told, we're doing this, this and this and that's what you have to ask them and that's the end of it.

JOD: So the program was like three, four months, and you left after five weeks.

E: Yeah about five weeks.

JOD: So was there much of the voxpops?

E: Like the voxpop we done was more to the end when I left, then a week or two later I was like no I'm done with this.

JOD: Would you recommend people from Sphere 17 to get involved with NEAR?

E - 3 48secs: Yeah well if it's something you want to do. It just wasn't me. I thought it was going to be this and that, but I got there and it wasn't, and I was like no I'm not mad about this.

JOD: I think that's all we need, thanks a million.