



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



- UNESCO Chair in
- Children, Youth and Civic Engagement
- Ireland



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# **In this Presentation....**

- 1. Explore Youth Civic Engagement in Ireland Historical  
(brief and light touch!)**
- 2. Defining Describing and Valuing in Civic Engagement**
- 3. Some theoretical Underpinnings:  
(Social Support and Resilience)**
- 4. Models - What Young people and those who work  
with them can do**
- 5. What Government can and should do!**

# Starting Point

- There is the prospect that with support, children can and do overcome adversity
- Core to the mission of Ireland, UNESCO, as well as the wider United Nations family
- Recognise Youth as Strength and as a resource - their civic activation gives this expression
- Parent rear young people for themselves as families but also for the benefit of community and civic society

# Irish Historical Context on parenting

- *Primarily Catholic - Large Family*
- *Close Near by Ties in Rural and Urban Contexts*
- *Child to Adulthood roles and responsibilities  
Short to long trousers!*
- *Now a major change in Irish Demographics  
Youth and Citizenship*

*So A massive learning curve and change in Ireland!*

# **Early recognition of Children/Youth as Valued Citizens by Pioneering Women of the Irish State**

**“The Countess” et al!**

**“Children’s Patriot Treat”**

**Assembled 30,000 children in Dublin 1900 (Dolan 2010)**

# Lessons From the Past – Youth as Civic Activists!

## **Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870)**

1. Young Pip!
2. The Urania Project
3. The Ragged Schools
  - Led by Children and Youth Participants
  - Early Mentoring

(Hartley, 2008)

# Connecting Civic Engagement

- Valuing Young People today - not just into future
- Children's proven capacity to be civically active in communities
- Examples: Tsunami - 9/11
- Should not take extreme events to see this
- So by being supportive to others young people benefit themselves,
- This is particularly the case in respect of Disadvantaged Youth
- Not Seeing youth as MAD BAD or SAD!!

# Why Civic Engagement of Youth is Critical?

*For Youth & Families*

*Better outcomes for children  
Preventing Problems*

*For Communities*

*Effective Family Functioning  
Healthy Communities*

*For Society*

*Promoting Social Inclusion  
Effective Use of Resources  
Productive, well- educated workforce  
Reduction of inequalities  
Promoting Active Citizenship  
Developing Human and Social Capital*

# The Parenting of Youth

## All passed on as 'social currency'

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>
<p>Give physical care            Give affection            Give positive regard            Provide emotional security            Set boundaries            Allow room to develop            Teach social behaviour            Help develop skills            Help cognitive development            Facilitate social activity</p>	<p>Feeding, shelter, rest, health, protection            Overt physical and verbal warmth and comfort            Give approval, sensitivity to signals, responsiveness            Consistent and predictable warmth, sensitivity and comfort            Clear statements on what is acceptable, good supervision            Provide and allow challenges within the child's capability            Model reliability, reasonableness, and assertiveness            Encourage learning and exploration, be responsive in play            Reading, constructive play, monitor schooling            Facilitate peer contact and provide new experiences</p>

# UNICEF/UNESCO WELLBEING INDICATORS FOR YOUTH

- Material wellbeing
- Health and Safety
- Educational Well-being
- Family and Peer Relationships
- Behaviours and Risks
- Subjective well-being

(UNICEF, 2009)

# Types of Civic Engagement for Youth:

**Political** - Social Justice – Cause Based

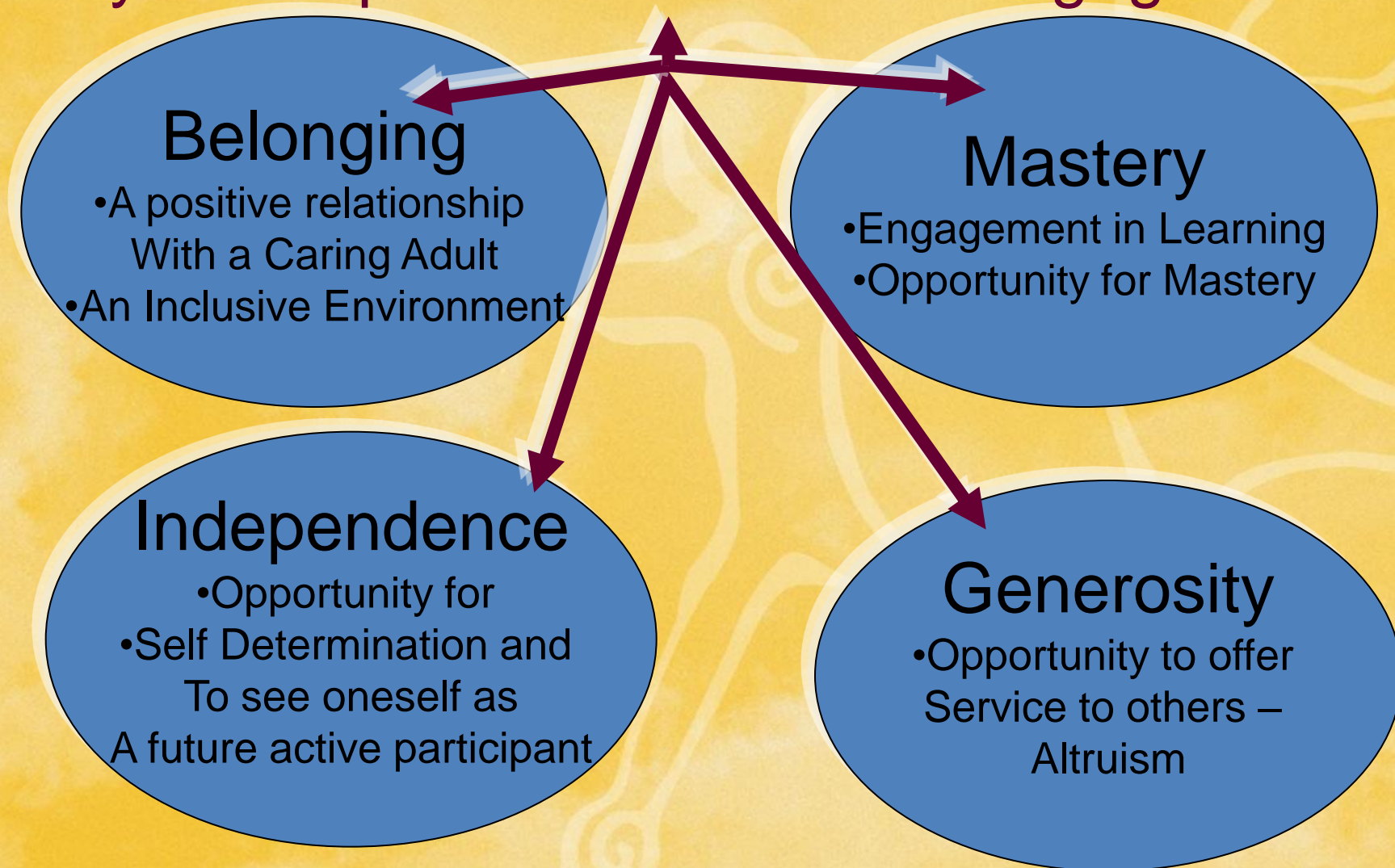
**Social** – Altruism - Need Based

Youth Civic Engagement **in Home**  
“Young Carers”

Youth Civic Engagement **in School**  
“Peer Educators or Mentors”

Youth Civic Engagement **in Community**  
Club or Social Project Leaders

# Key Descriptors of Youth Civic Engagement



Adapted from the 4- H programmes Prepared by Cathann A. Kress, Director, Youth Development, National 4-H Headquarters, CSREES, USDA. September 2004.

# The Ingredient of Self-compassion

- Issues of Social Presentation and Emotional Literacy (UNGER 2006)

***Buddha - "All that we are is the result of what we have thought".***

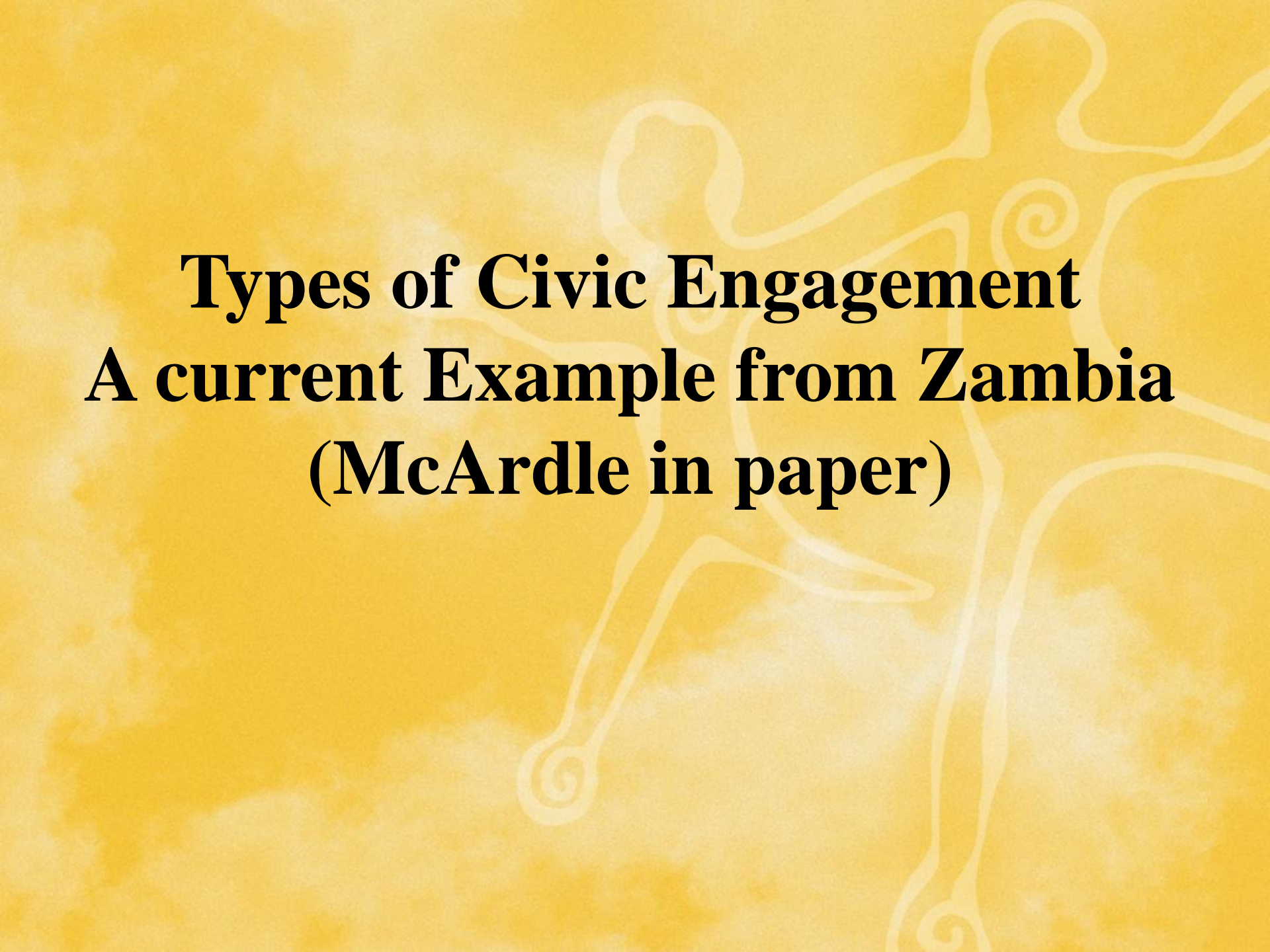
**Better Wellbeing**

**Responsive Social Support  
Strong Resilience  
Self-Compassion**

**Social & Political Civic Engagement**

**All Youth with Normative and Non-Normative Development**





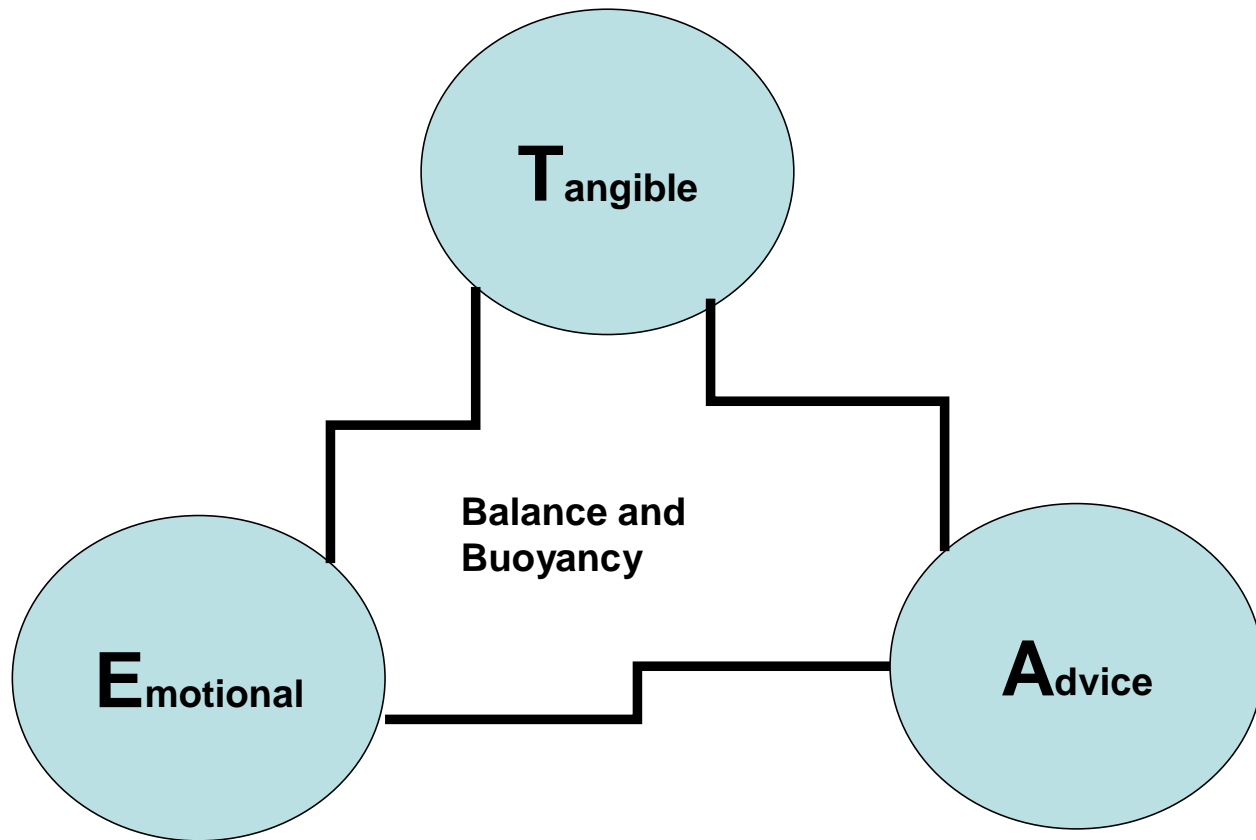
**Types of Civic Engagement**  
**A current Example from Zambia**  
**(McArdle in paper)**

Civic	Economic	Social	Political	Cultural
<b>School:</b>	<b>Male activities:</b>	<b>Community:</b>	<b>Youth:</b>	<b>School:</b>
A member of: Children’s council or student council Prefect or monitor Children’ Rights Club Debate Club	Street vending Farming and labouring. Crushing stone	Peer groups Caring for others National Independence Day celebrations	Youth pressure groups	Culture club Drama club Poetry club Dancing singing Arts club
<b>Community:</b> Member of youth activities, clubs, scouts/girl guides, red cross, Youth Alive,	<b>Female activities in public:</b> <b>Markets, maids, farming and prostitution</b>	<b>Sport/school activities:</b> Football, netball, volleyball, basketball, baseball, athletics, rugby, tennis and swimming	<b>Mainly Adults:</b>	<b>Community:</b> Initiation ceremonies Language Traditional values
National Youth Association <b>Children’s press bureau</b> Sport for Action	<b>Female activities in the home:</b> Household chores, caring for siblings.	<b>Home-based games:</b> Hide and seek, snakes and ladders, Icienga, Nsolo,, sigi, padda padda and riding bicycles	Advocacy by churches	<b>Spirituality/faith:</b> Churches of different faiths Youth choirs. Salvation Army
	Rural development programmes	<b>School:</b> Anti-AIDs club, Road and transport agency – road safety. Science club, self-evaluation club		Evangelism, outreach Scripture Unions, YWCA



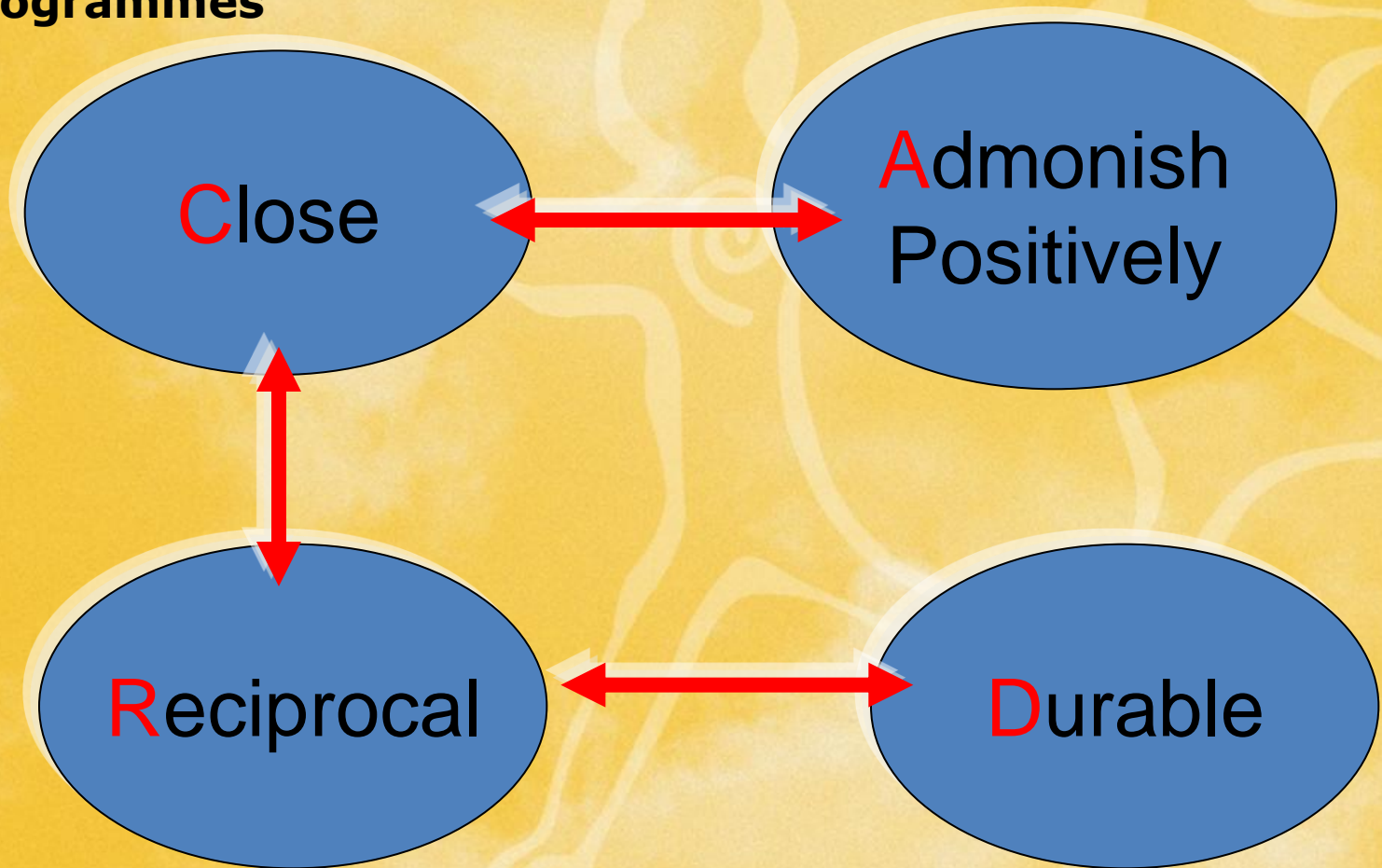
**Social Support Theory  
And the Civic Engagement of  
Young People via Leadership**

# TEA as Types of Social Support for Young People

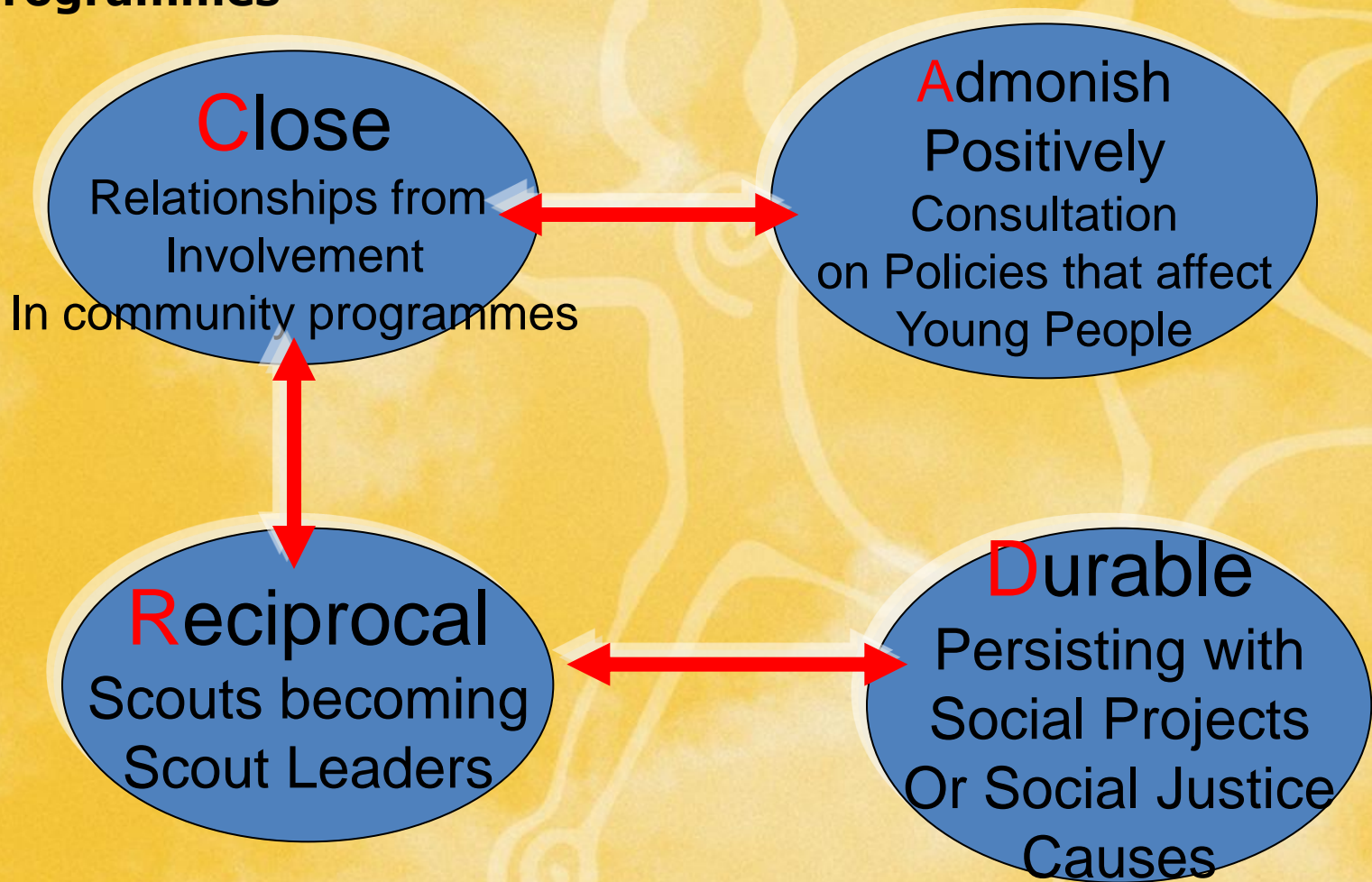


**Dolan, 2008**

**CARDS** as Qualities of Social Support and Attainable for Young People through Youth Leadership and CE Programmes



**CARDS** as Qualities of Social Support and Attainable for Young People through Youth Leadership and CE Programmes



# Resilience v Despair and Familial Civic Engagement

- Resilient in Hiding
- Despair post Sister's Death in Captivity

# Defining Social Support

**“Responsive acts of assistance between human beings” Tracy and Whittaker (1994)**

**Its Proven Buffer to Stress role/One of the few proven areas of Social Science (From medical research)**

# Key issues in Social Support for Youth and for their Civic Engagement

- **Informal Support**

(Ghate and Hazel 2002)

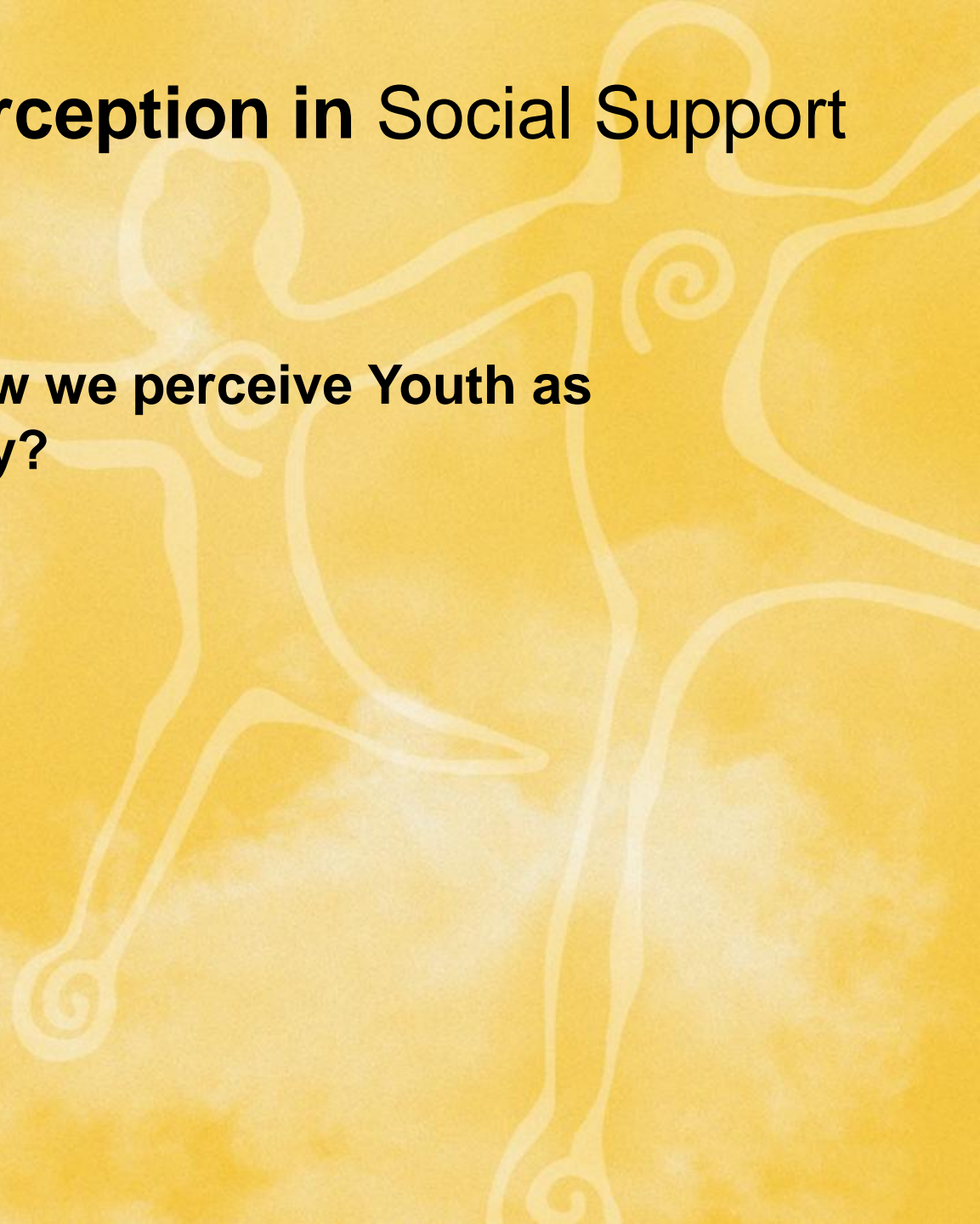
- **Hidden** Support as most effective (Cutrona et al 2010)

- Levitt's **Convoy Model** of Support (Levitt, 1998)

<b>UNICEF Indicator of Wellbeing in Youth</b>	<b>Social Support Factor</b>	<b>Civic Engagement Activity</b>
<b>Material well-being</b>	<b>Concrete Support</b>	<b>Environmental Community Clean up Schemes</b>
<b>Health and Safety</b>	<b>Concrete and Advice Support</b>	<b>Youth participation in personal/community Safety projects</b>
<b>Educational Well-being</b>	<b>Advice/ Esteem Support from Durable Relations</b>	<b>Communal In-School Educational &amp; Social Assignments</b>
<b>Family and Peer Relationships</b>	<b>Closeness and Reciprocity of Support</b>	<b>Intergenerational Projects</b>
<b>Behaviours and Risks</b>	<b>Mitigated by a Positive Social Network membership</b>	<b>Peer Mentoring Projects</b>
<b>Subjective well-being</b>	<b>Perceived Social Support</b>	<b>Activities where youth fundraise for others in need</b>

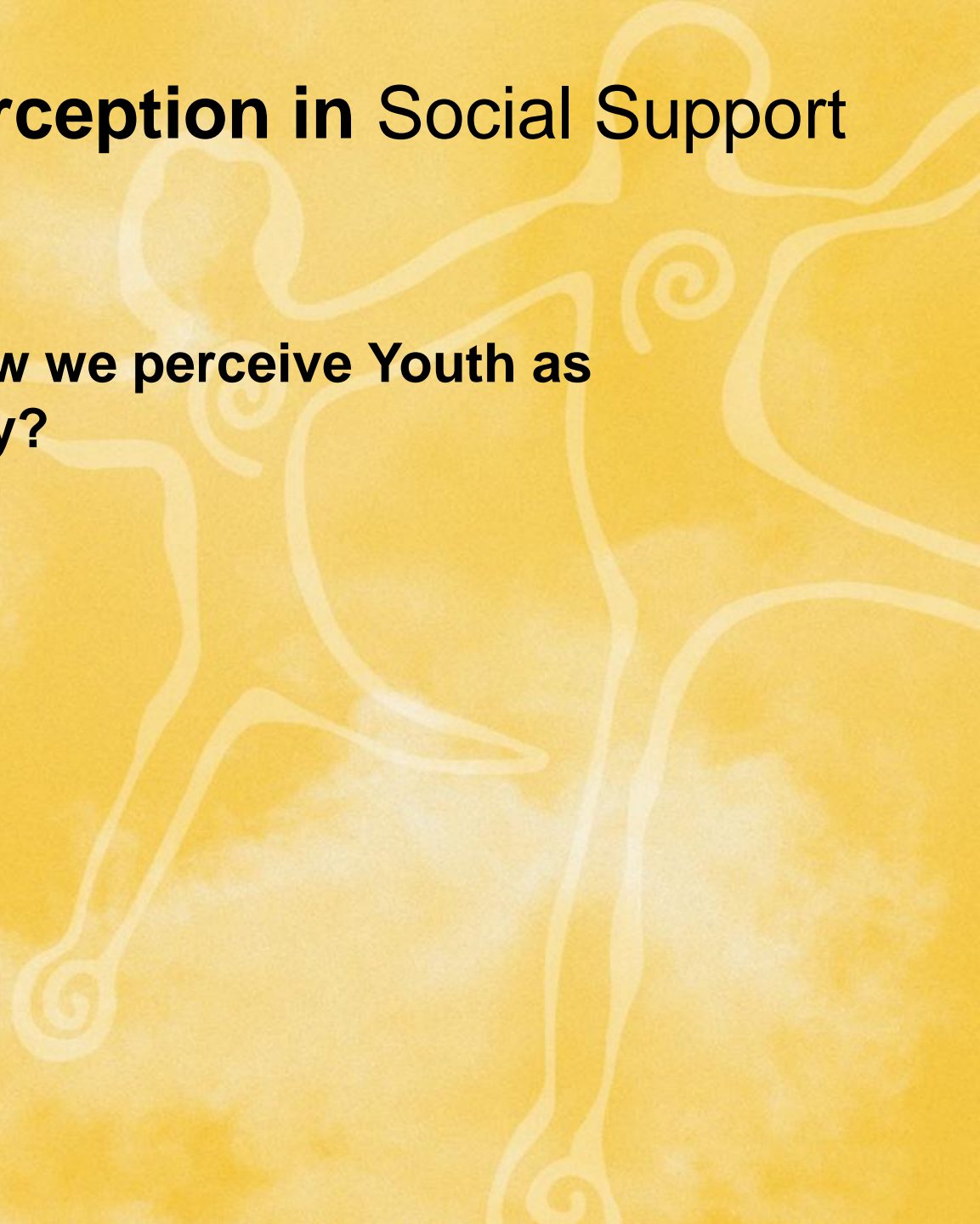
# **The Power of Perception in Social Support**

**A key Ingredient in how we perceive Youth as contributors to Society?**



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**A key Ingredient in how we perceive Youth as contributors to Society?**



# **Outside of Parents and Family**

**-the Role of Friendships in adolescence and as  
Influence in CE**

**(Webster-Stratton 2007)**

## For Teenage Parents

Hidden and Durable Support

Particularly from Parents

Perceived Support –

Key how they viewed help on offer.

Convoyed Networks

Enabling them to Access Education/Services

(Riordan 2005)

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**Social Provisions Scale** (Dolan, Cutrona and Russell 2010)

Measures Social Support in Children/Parents  
for Quantity and Quality of support

# What I have learned

- From my own Youth
- work experience and from my research
- For those in adversity, civic engagement can lead to significant improvement - and help rebuild key relationships
- The Case of John and Hillwalking!!!

# Respect for Children and Youth

- Underpinning Rights as part of Civic Engagement
- Social Justice in Children and Youth (Honneth 1995) – **“Recognition”**
- **Hypothesis: If children and youth are valued, they will be civically engaged (political and social)**

# Youth Cafés as a Model/Project for Social Civic Engagement of Youth

- Youth Led Community Service – with full Youth Governance
- Universal Support programme for youth drugs and alcohol free
- Targeted Support Programmes e.g. Gay and Lesbian Youth
- Social Civic Engagement e.g. base for support to homeless adults “soup runs”

See [OMCYA.ie](http://OMCYA.ie)

# Youth Parliament as a Model/Project for Political Civic Engagement of Youth

- Youth Participation – voice of youth on policy
- Dail no Nog operates as a parliament
- Venue to express concerns on issues that affect youth e.g forthcoming Irish referendum on the rights of children and youth
- Town planning
- Service for youth planning consultation

See [OMCYA.ie](http://OMCYA.ie)

# Resilience

“Doing Better than expected”  
“Bouncing Back”  
“overcoming the Odds” (Masten, 2004)

Weighing Scale - Protective Factors  
outweighing Risk Factors (Gilligan, 2009)

**How can this  
be built  
through Civic  
Engagement?**

# Civic Engagement of Youth as Compensatory

Civic Activity can create Space from self and problems; in-depth understanding; belief from 'engaging and doing' that you can succeed - (Rutter et al, 1984)

Can also Foster Self-Compassion & Restoration

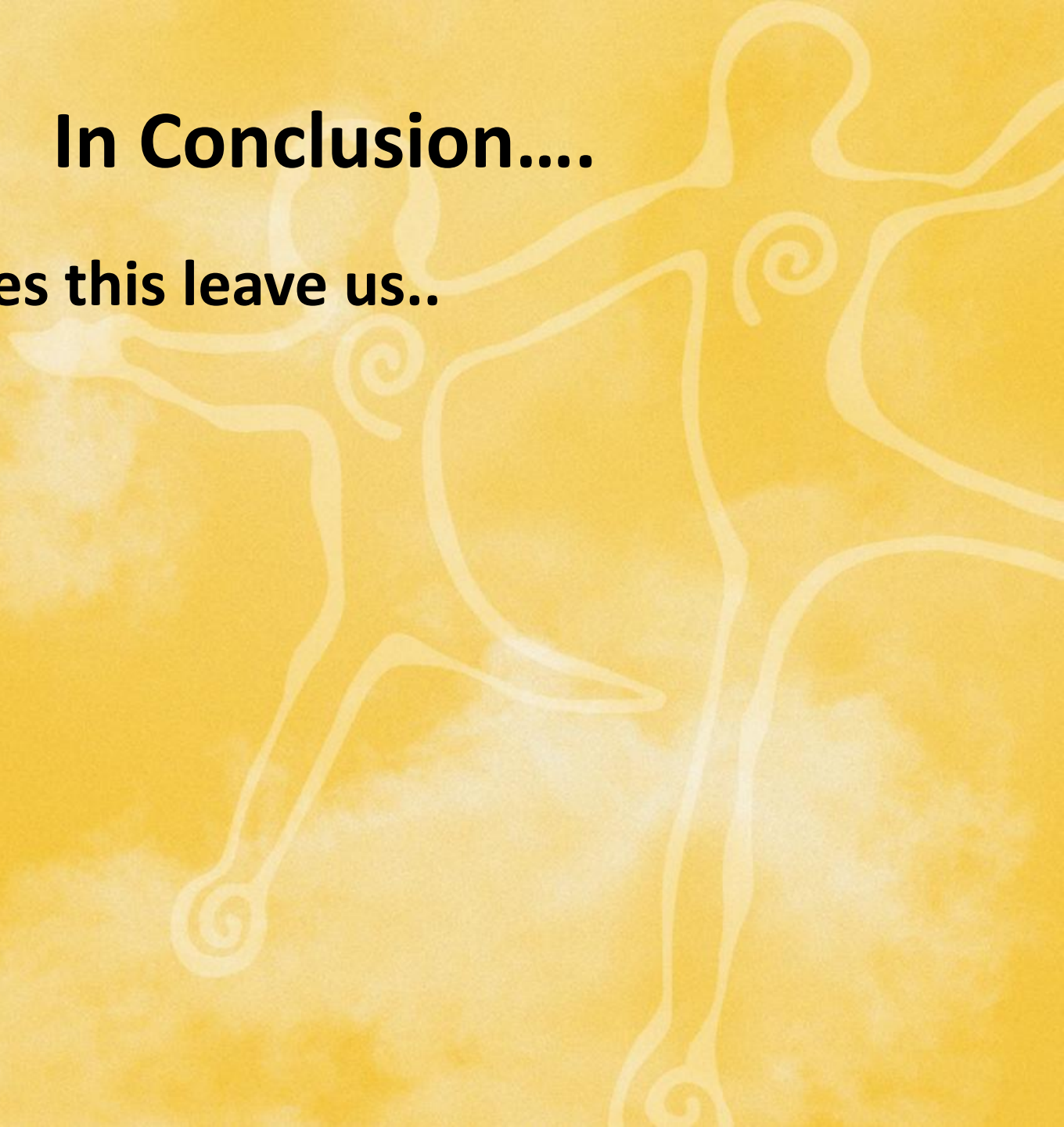
How can this be built through Civic Engagement?

# Civic Engagement & Child/Youth Rights Internationally

- Bound by issues such as religion, class and gender
- Examples of Issues in:
- Republic of Ireland
  - Countries in transition
  - Sub-Saharan Countries
  - Reciprocal learning
  - Need for Cultural Competence (Husain, 2006)

# **In Conclusion....**

- **So Where does this leave us..**

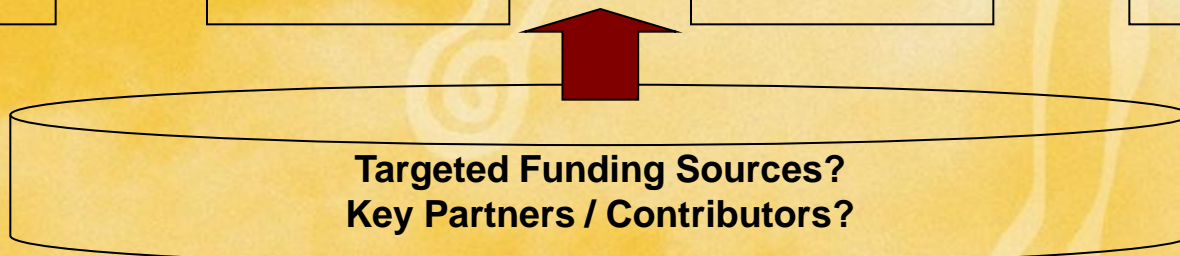
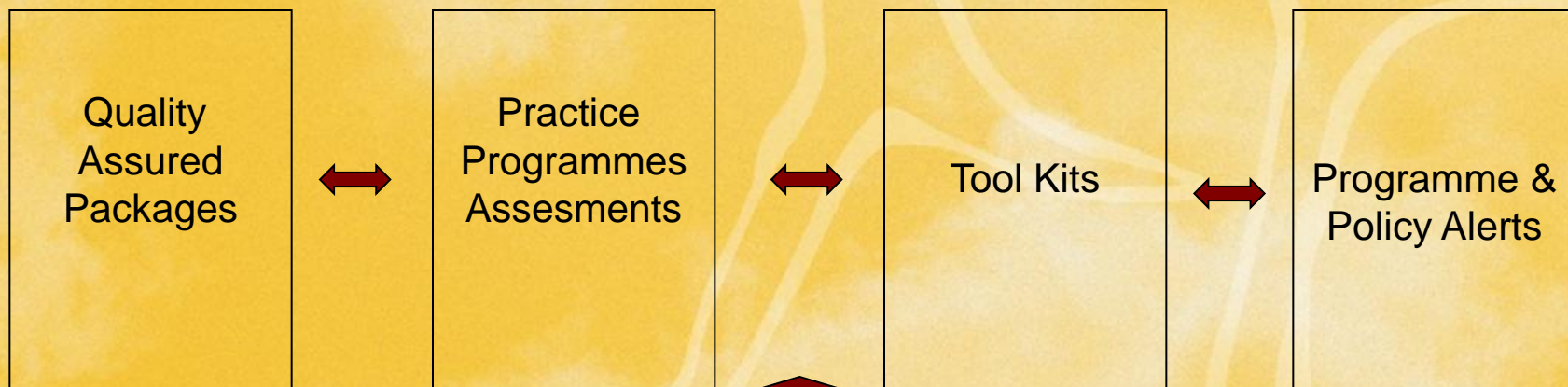


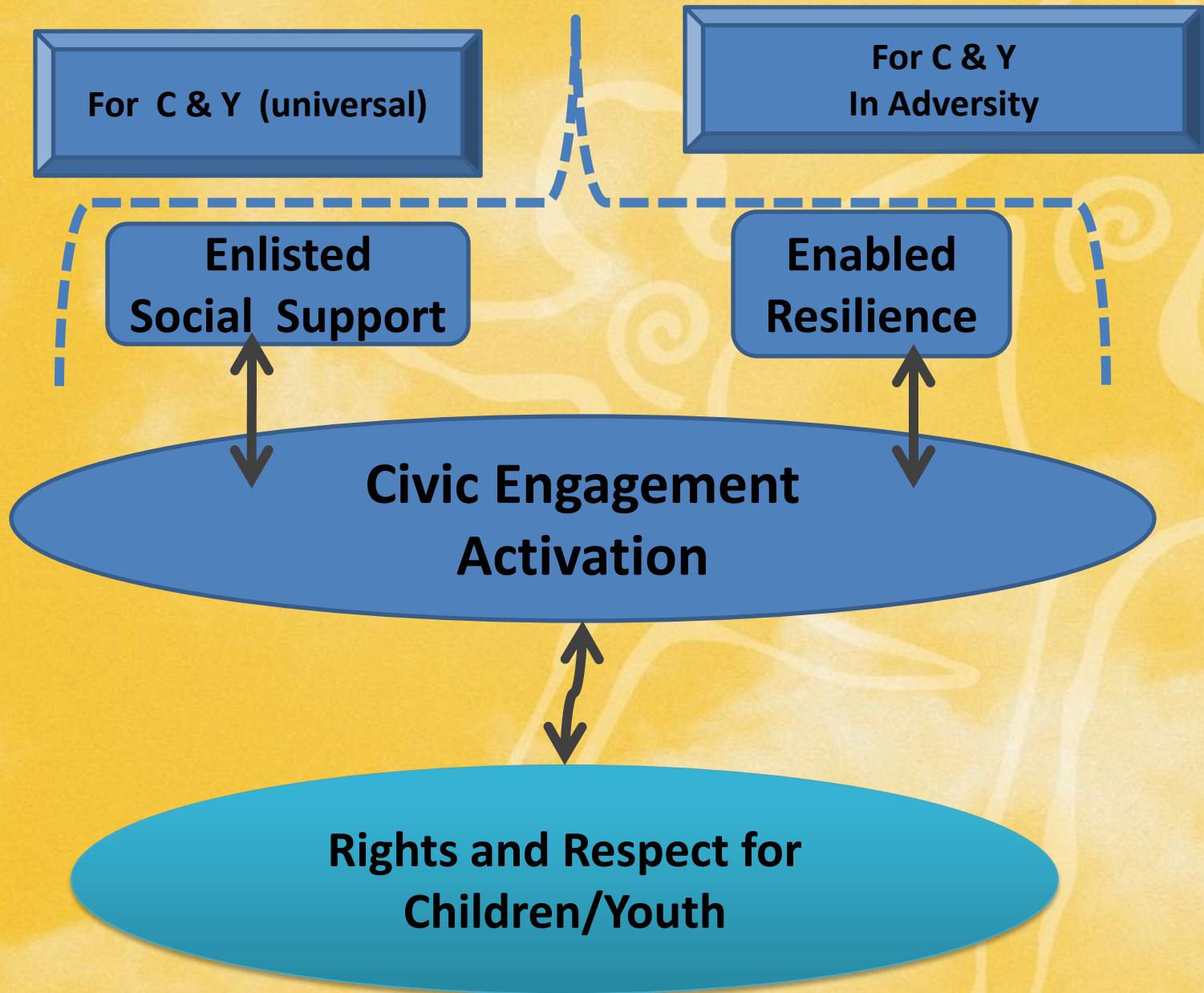
# Development & Quality Testing of Youth Civic Engagement

## Activities



## Products





**Instilling predictable hope in others that they can continue to grow and will overcome the odds**

- Agenda for Youth and CE**
- (But hidden)**