



SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Reading Rooms 'Listen, Share, Change'

THEME:

Building Positive Relations:
Regional Level Projects

FUNDING (ERDF+MATCH):

€1,625,838.4

MATCH FUNDERS:

Executive Office Northern
Ireland and the Department
of Rural and Community
Development, Ireland

LEAD PARTNER:

NI Housing Executive
(NIHE)

PROJECT PARTNERS:

The Verbal Arts

PROJECT CONTACT:

andrea.doran@theverbal.co

Start Date: 01/08/2017

End Date: 31/08/2021

 [https://
www.theverbal.co/
listen-share-change](https://www.theverbal.co/listen-share-change)

 @EveryStoryNI

 @listensharechange

Approximately 1,560 beneficiaries will take part in the Listen, Share, Change project from across 52 Housing Executive areas across Northern Ireland.

The project is being delivered through the Verbal Arts' innovative 'Reading Rooms' model. This model utilises literature based discussions as a means of addressing challenging subjects in reading groups. Such an approach aims to encourage participants to explore and reflect on issues relevant to their own lives (e.g. diversity, heritage and conflict). The overall aim is to help build positive relations through stories, conversation and shared experience between people from all different backgrounds.

In addition, the project will see the training and development of 120 Future Neighbourhood Champions that will further implement the model beyond the Peace IV project, as well as the creation of 104 Future Youth Leaders to promote active citizenship and engagement at a local level.

"Our group love our Reading Room sessions. I enjoy it as I love connecting with people I wouldn't have normally met, their stories and experiences make it all so different and engaging every week."

Nuala O'Toole - Neighbourhood Champion for Cavanaleck Community Group, Enniskillen



Cavanaleck Community Association (Enniskillen) at their Christmas Reading Room



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The project will equip participants with the skills to enable them to become active decision makers, allowing them to shape the development of a society in which housing has a role in creating a peaceful, inclusive, prosperous and fair society.

Participants will be offered the opportunity to meet new people and participate in shared reading experiences. It is envisaged that through working with people from different communities, cultural, and religious backgrounds the project will make a positive impact on the ways in which different communities perceive and interact with each other.

"My life involved going to work and home, no interaction with anyone outside of that. Getting involved in the reading rooms has helped me fit in. I love the conversations around the stories." Eileen, project participant

"I love how the stories change my opinion on things. I always have an opinion at the start but this is different at the end." Dolores, project participant



Ladies from both Mid- Shankill and Clonard (Belfast) gather weekly for Reading Rooms

Key output:

Number of beneficiaries to the project: 1,560

Number of Future Neighbourhood Champions to be trained: 120

Regional level projects that result in meaningful, purposeful and sustained contact between persons from different communities: 1