



SPECIAL EU PROGRAMMES BODY

Project Case Study: Reflecting on the Get Real Project

THEME:

Building Positive Relations:
Regional Level Projects

FUNDING (ERDF+MATCH):

€763,280.67

MATCH FUNDERS:

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

LEAD PARTNER:

NIACRO

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Probation Board Northern
Ireland, Probation Service
Ireland, Victim Support
Northern Ireland, South
Belfast Roundtable

Start Date: 01/11/2017

End Date: 31/03/2021



[https://
www.niacro.co.uk/
get-real](https://www.niacro.co.uk/get-real)



@getrealniacro

The Get Real project adopted a facilitated process, utilising restorative practices to address hate crime; providing participant's with the opportunity to be heard, ask questions, take responsibility, feel empowered, explore impact and repair harm.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted the delivery of the project in March 2020, but the team quickly adapted and virtual delivery via Zoom commenced in May 2020, with significant uptake in participation.

The project is delivered through three separate, yet connecting strands: Get Real about Justice; Get Real about Identity; Get Real about Society, with the first strand working directly with the perpetrators and victims of hate crime. Despite the unfortunate reality (that on average eight hate crimes are being reported everyday in Northern Ireland) referrals to the programme did not reflect this worrying trend.

In a recent review of Hate Crime Legislation, it was reported that incidents of this nature were rising and the law needed to change in response, but this need not mean harsher punishments being dealt by the courts; rather, that a different approach was required to deal with this problem.

“What we have found, and what we in NIACRO believe, is that a more appropriate approach for dealing with hate crime is through restorative practices and principles. Giving those who offend the opportunity to hear of the harm and impact of their actions and to give the victim a voice is a more positive approach which holds greater potential to change attitudes and behaviours. Education goes a long way towards challenging and changing behaviour motivated by hate.”

Judge Des Marrinan

As the Get Real Project draws to a close in Spring 2021, it is hoped that the legacy of the project's learning will continue to educate and motivate others, within NIACRO and beyond, and that restorative opportunities are open to all communities as a means to heal, educate and move forward in a more positive society.