



PRESS RELEASE

Date: 2nd July 2018

TRANSFORM PROJECT LAUNCH

The Transformative Education for Positive Relationships (The Transform Project) is a project supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). The Project has been awarded €2,390,658.41 to support 480 young people at risk, from areas of disadvantage and social exclusion to successfully engage or re-engage in informal educational processes that build confidence, skills and resilience in young people.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in Ireland.

The 4 year Project will be delivered through a collaborative partnership involving Youth Link: NI (Lead Partner) and Youth Initiatives and Mencap.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“This project will help combat sectarianism in transforming the lives of almost five hundred young people, on a cross-border basis. It will give all of the participants a unique insight into the views and opinions of other people from a different cultural and religious background. They will also engage in sporting and cultural activities from a wide-range of traditions and gain invaluable volunteering experience, allowing them to take part in civic life with more confidence.”**

Delivered in partnership with youth workers the project will reduce barriers to learning, enhance employment prospects and enable young people to take their place as active citizens and peace builders within their own communities and beyond.

Participants will have the opportunity to achieve OCN (Open College Network) accreditation at Level 1 and Level 2, gain volunteering experience and participate in a sporting event from a tradition different from their own and in cultural/arts events tackling issues of sectarianism, racism and discrimination.

The project will deliver three clear outcomes; Personal Development, Good Relations and Citizenship – enabling personal development in self-awareness, understanding, relationship skills and active

citizenship. Participants will have an increased understanding of diversity and willingness to see diversity as making a positive contribution to society.

Among the areas to be targeted will be: Antrim, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Derry/Londonderry, Armagh, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, and Donegal.

On an annual basis each partner organisation will work with 120 young people in 6 groups on a cross community basis.

Two full-time youth workers will be allocated to each group for the duration of the project. The relationship that will be established between the young people and the youth workers will be an important vehicle for the success of the project and will play a crucial role in enabling transformation in the lives of each individual young person.

Staff employed by the Partnership will include a Project Co-ordinator, a Part-time Administrator and 12 Full-time Youth Workers.

An incentive payment is available to eligible project participants to encourage engagement, attendance and retention of young people on the programme.

- ENDS

Notes to the editor

YOUTH LINK: NI (LEAD PARTNER)

Youth Link is a unique partnership of the four larger Churches working together to develop excellence in youth work and ministry, enabling young people and youth practitioners to be agents of transformation in a divided society.

Youth Link is the largest provider of accredited training for volunteer and part-time youth practitioners and young people in Northern Ireland. It is the only forum in Northern Ireland where churches co-operate formally in the service of young people. It was formed in 1992 by a strategic alliance of the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Youth Link exists to provide support and training for youth workers and peace building and reconciliation experiences for young people.



Youth Link delivers a comprehensive programme involving young people, young adults and youth practitioners focused on the informal educational dimension addressing a range of youth leadership, community relations, citizenship and peace and reconciliation issues, developing community relations organisational policy and strategy and resources to support the development of programmes.

The main activities of Youth Link are as follows:

- Making available to those involved in work with young people training in youth work, peace building and reconciliation informed by the latest theory and practice;
- Providing a coherent training route that will offer young people and adult volunteers a progressive pathway into youth and community work and is relevant and applicable for implementation in the Qualifications Credit Framework;
- Embedding community relations, equality and diversity into all aspects of the work of Youth Link and to promote CRED within its partner organisations;
- Providing opportunities for young people of different traditions and cultural backgrounds to develop mutual understanding, tolerance, acceptance and respect, and to be agents of transformation in a divided society;
- Providing opportunities for young people to have their voices heard and to become active participants within church and society;
- Enabling young people at risk to successfully engage or re-engage in informal accredited educational processes that builds confidence, skills and resilience and reduces barriers to learning;
- Building capacity and social capital within and between communities in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties where infrastructure is less well developed to engage young people in youth and community work and reconciliation.

On an annual basis Youth Link offers support and training to approximately 10,000 young people, young adults and youth workers across the Churches' youth constituency and wider youth sector



MENCAP

Mencap was established in Northern Ireland in 1965 and each year supports thousands of people with a learning disability to live their lives the way they choose.

Mencap works in partnership with people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland to fight to change laws and improve services and access to education, employment and leisure facilities.

Mencap delivers a wide range of practical support services for children, young people and adults with a learning disability and their families and carers.

Mencap ensures that children attending Mencap's Nursery can learn and play in a therapeutic environment that helps to develop skills and achieve goals that would be unattainable without specialist expertise and support.

The organisation provides people with a learning disability a platform to speak out about the things that are important to them and challenges attitudes and assumptions about learning disability and involving people from different backgrounds.

YOUTH INITIATIVES

Youth Initiatives is a cross community youth work organisation set up in 1991 which aims to awaken hope, inspire initiative and to mobilise young people to make a vital contribution to their community and to reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Youth Initiatives history and foundation began in the Colin area of West Belfast. Over the past 25 years the organisation has expanded its outreach programme of work on an annual basis to hundreds of hard to reach young people from areas of disadvantage and social exclusion across Northern Ireland.

Current programmes are being delivered in Belfast, Downpatrick, Banbridge, Lisburn and Derry / Londonderry.



The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.

It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.

The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu