



PRESS RELEASE

Date: 11th June 2018

YMCA AND YWCA CELEBRATE LAUNCH OF M-POWER YOUTH PROJECT

Peace IV funded project aims to m-power young people

The official launch of the m-power youth project took place on Wednesday, 6th June. A full house enjoyed the special event at Belfast YMCA, with young people, staff, partner agencies and funders in attendance.

m-power is an innovative, youth-focused project, managed by YMCA Ireland and delivered in partnership with local YMCAs and YWCA Ireland. The project, which has received €3.5m funding under the Children and Young People's objective of the PEACE IV Programme, aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. 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.

m-power youth project enables young people, aged 14 to 25 years old, to make positive changes in their lives through participating in personal development, citizenship and community relations programmes. Young people involved on the project will have opportunities to make new friends, enjoy new experiences, develop confidence and gain qualifications. They will also have the opportunity for outdoor learning, facilitated by Greenhill YMCA. m-power aims to make a positive impact and create real change for up to 800 young people over the lifetime of the project.

The m-power youth project operates across 10 sites, which are made up of local YMCAs in Northern Ireland and the YWCA in the border region. Delivery partners include YMCAs in Derry-Londonderry, Lurgan, Portadown, Lisburn, Belfast, North Down, Newcastle, Larne, Carrickfergus and Monaghan YWCA. The project has been developed and supported by all YMCA and YWCA Associations across the region.

Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, which is responsible for the EU's PEACE IV Programme said: **"Whilst our children and young people may not have**



experienced the worst of the conflict/troubles they can still be adversely affected by the issues of segregation and intolerance which have resulted from it. This can lead to a high level of mistrust and division which is passed from one generation to the next. In order to break this cycle EU funding has been provided to projects like ‘m-power’, which will act as catalysts for change, as the young people who participate in them will be able to share the new and more positive attitudes they have learnt with their own families and communities.”

John Peacock, Deputy National Director of YMCA Ireland, stated, **“The m-power youth project is based on youth work principles and outdoor learning. This YMCA/YWCA partnership is focused on building relationships with young people and giving them the support and opportunities to build confidence, resilience and become active citizens. 20 years on from the Good Friday agreement, we hope that these young people will be part of building peace and good relations in their communities and so play their part in shaping a new Northern Ireland. We thank SEUPB for giving us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of 800 young people over the next 4 years”.**

Audrey Wilson, General Secretary of YWCA Ireland, said, **“We are delighted to partner with YMCA Ireland in the delivery of this important project. Young people must be at the very core of our peacebuilding efforts. They have the capacity and energy to lead our communities towards non–violence and reconciliation and to build a positive future for themselves and the generations that follow. I am confident that the m-power youth project will contribute to a more sustainable peace in Northern Ireland and in County Monaghan.”**

Ethan, a m-power participant and one of three young people to receive completion certificates at the event, commented, **“I've been on m-power with Lisburn YMCA for 6 months. The project has helped me to meet new people and given me a regular routine in comfortable surroundings. I've also completed an accredited qualification with my new friends from Bangor and Newcastle.”**

For more information about m-power youth project, visit www.ymcampower.net or contact the m-power project office by telephone (028 9038 6461) or by email (info@ymcampower.net).



ENDS

For more information, please contact Julia Kee - julia.kee@ymca-ireland.net or 07398 818916 - or Stuart Buchanan - stuart@northdownymca.org or 07591 840805.

Notes to Editors

- 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