



PRESS RELEASE

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YOUTH NETWORK FOR PEACE

Today YouthAction Northern Ireland, a regional voluntary youth work organisation, launched the EU PEACE IV-funded ‘Youth Network for Peace’ project at its Youth Participative Democracy Hub in Belfast.

‘Youth Network for Peace’ is a youth-led regional project which will involve 10,000 young people to connect in a range of participative social action projects on a cross-community and cross-border basis.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body commented: **“This cross-border project will allow thousands of young people from a wide range of different cultures and backgrounds to meet and learn from each other. It will be youth-led, meaning that all of the participants will have a say in how it is delivered to meet their personal development needs. This approach lies at the heart of the EU’s PEACE IV Programme which has been specifically designed to support young people by giving them new opportunities to grow, develop and make a positive difference to their community.”**

Lead partner YouthAction are delighted to co-ordinate a dynamic cross border partnership of 13 progressive organisations committed to supporting young people as active change agents in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. Assistant Director and Programme Co-ordinator for the Youth Network for Peace Martin Mc Mullan welcomed the support from the European Union’s Peace IV programme managed by SEUPB, noting: **“the regional funding will not only support a vibrant network of 10,000 young people aged 14-25yrs North and South to build new and meaningful relationships and to be more involved in social and political activism, but it also provides a forum to better co-ordinate youth participation across key regional voluntary youth organisations which enhance grass roots peace developments with young people and their respective communities.”**



The project is overseen by a 25 member Youth Steering Body led by the NI Youth Forum. Youth Steering Body member Odhrán Feeley (NI Youth Forum) commented: ***“I got involved in the Youth Network for Peace as I felt like it could help improve my social and team work skills. I feel already, I have made new friends, and strengthened bonds with people I already knew. I am excited about being a member of the steering group and having a lead role.”*** Alex Cleland (Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster) also welcomed the opportunity ***“to meet new people by pushing myself out of my comfort zone. Also, to understand more about different communities and their perspectives on different topics.”***

Core to this dynamic Youth Network for Peace will be an online radio station and social media channel which will be run by young people. This channel – named Radio YNP (Youth Network for Peace) - will have unique and informative content each week that will highlight young people's issues and aspirations.

Project worker Seán Mc Donnell is delighted to be leading an editorial team of young people aged 14-25yrs to run this innovative online radio platform which will be broadcast 24hrs per day. Radio YNP will broadcast unique and informative content each week. This content will be curated, captured, edited and scheduled for broadcast by the editorial team that will be trained in broadcasting skills and given specific roles to ensure the radio station functions correctly. Seán commented: ***“The youth-led online radio station and social media channel will provide a platform for young people to express their opinions in a constructive youth friendly space and where they can promote a range of other youth activities and programmes across the full cross border partnership.”***

Local broadcaster and board member of YouthAction NI Pamela Ballantine endorsed the launch of the Youth Network for Peace and YNP radio saying: ***“So many broadcasters have been doing programmes for young people, but to have young people creating and establishing their own programmes around their own issues and from their own perspective is more empowering and meaningful.”*** Pamela further noted the talent among young people in Northern Ireland and the border counties commenting: ***“the team approach behind Radio YNP will help nurture skills in production, lighting, sound engineering, direction, camera work and auto-cue. Having a diversity of young***



people will support minority groups to have their voice heard in a developing multi-cultural and inclusive society.”

Match-funding for the project has been provided the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

For information on the Youth Network for Peace please contact Martin Mc Mullan at 02890240551 / martin@youthaction.org

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Notes to Editor:

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel 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 address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu