

OPEN DOORS



PEACE IV

Peace



Northern Ireland - Ireland

European Regional Development Fund

OPEN DOORS INTRO

There can be no doubt these are uncertain times for us all just now and everyone from the Open Doors project hopes you are keeping safe and well during the COVID-19 pandemic!

Although Co-operation Ireland's office is closed, you can still get in touch with the Open Doors project by emailing the project manager at mmillar@cooperationireland.org

We are all in this together and in the words of *Mahatma Gandhi*, "*Be the change you want to see in the world*".

This edition of the Open Doors e-zine includes;

- Achievements
- Testimonies
- Case Studies
- Sustainable Leadership Programme
- Conflict Transformation Programme
- Development
- Covid-19



OPEN DOORS ACHIEVEMENTS

184 Outreach Clinics have been held in the past 6 months

1101 people were supported via our Outreach Clinics

557 people were signposted to relevant support agencies

1779 members of the general public were engaged via the Open Doors project

109 service providers have been engaged

7 members of the Open Doors team completed an OCN Level 3 Qualification in Generalist Advice

7 members of the EPFC community completed the Sustainable Leadership Programme delivered by Liverpool University

6 Operational meetings took place

2 Joint Management Committee meetings were held

1 Seminar addressing Irish Unity and the Unionist voice was delivered by Teach Na Failte



A member of the EPFC community teaching student how to use a fishing tackle



Generalist Advice Training

TESTIMONIES

"I am an ex-political prisoner who has lived in the Divis area of West Belfast all my life. Over the past number of years, crime and mainly drugs have become almost the norm, and this led to Republicans coming under enormous pressure to help overcome this. The Open Doors project in West Belfast began discussions to see if 'Punishment Attacks' could become a thing of the past.

I took part in a discussion group set up by Teach na Failte through the Open Doors project. It was suggested we should improve our own skill base and we decided to look at the area of 'Restorative Practice' with the Ulster University.

The lecturer was fantastic and we all passed the Level 4 Certificate from Ulster University. This is a great achievement it has helped raise my confidence and self-esteem. I feel more confident in dealing with problems and certainly engaging with young people and others in my community to help resolve issues. I can assist them far better now than I could prior to completing the course."



"Open Doors staff have provided welfare rights and housing advice; they have facilitated many discussions with members of the EPFC community and quite a few over 50's men's groups as well as much needed training for members of the community.

I hope there is more to follow, as without this project a large constituency would have nothing at all!"

"My name is Harry I'm a 52-year-old ex-prisoner with a disability. I would not be very outgoing and have difficulties with reading and writing. Through the Open Doors Outreach Clinics, I was able to access support and information on the Personal Independent Payment (PIP). I received support to complete a very lengthy and complex form, I got support through the assessment process which eased my anxiety and I was successful in my claim.

I was awarded Enhanced Daily Living and Enhanced Mobility. This award has had a major impact on my life which has financially improved my income to the sum of £595.40 per month and is allowing me to do many things I could never do before.

I will be eternally grateful to Teach na Failte for if it was not for their support, I would never have had the confidence to be able to access this benefit."

CASE STUDY

Tommy (not his real name) is a 65 year old political ex-prisoner who has been living in a Care Home. He requires full-time care following a stroke. He was imprisoned in the 1970s and had a 'Special Category' status as a Loyalist Prisoner.

Staff on the Open Doors Project were made aware of Tommy by members of the EPFC community, staff have visited Tommy on several occasions taking him for drives along coastal routes for a change of scenery, brought him books and magazines then providing Tommy with a small TV for his room donated by the community. Tommy's health has had a serious impact on his mental health Open Doors staff have brought members of the EPFC community who know Tommy to the Care Home to visit him, which has had a major impact on improving his mental health.

The important thing for Tommy, is that he now has regular contact with other members of the EPFC community and he is not forgotten. The Open Doors Project has made a real, tangible and positive change to Tommy's life.

This is just one of many lives of the EPFC community the Open Doors staff have had an impact on.



A man goes to the doctor and says Dr, I think I am going hard of hearing
The Dr says, can you describe the symptoms
The man says, well, Marge has blue hair and Bart is yellow!

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



The Sustainable Leadership Programme was developed with Liverpool University and is delivered in partnership with Coisté. It is aimed to help develop the skills of future leaders in the communities. The programme will take place over two weekend residentials based in Belfast.

Topics covered in the programme include;

- Leadership
- Leadership & Risk Taking
- Leadership for Civic Engagement & Social Economy
- Long Term Perspectives on (Sustainable) Leadership

Places on the programme are limited, if you are interested in taking part please contact Michelle at mmillar@cooperationireland.org

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Whilst the Conflict Transformation Programme has been postponed due to the current climate, we all find ourselves in, Open Doors staff are ready to deliver this programme once it is safe to do so.

This exciting and innovative programme will be delivered in local communities by our Open Doors staff. The programme has a range of modules including

- Individual Development Plan
- Persuading, Influencing & Negotiating Skills
- Anti-Sectarianism
- Cultural Diversity Training
- Site Visits

If you would be interested in taking part in the Open Doors Conflict Transformation Programme, please contact one of the partner organisations

- Charter NI Belfast & Lisburn
Colin Halliday - p2plisburn@yahoo.co.uk
- Teach na Failte Belfast, Strabane & Derry
Paul Gallagher - paulgallagher46@hotmail.co.uk
- The Plough Historical and Cultural Group Newry
Leo Foy - theploughgroup@gmail.com
- EPIC Belfast
Steven Pollock - stevenpollock@btconnect.com

DEVELOPMENT

Belfast South Community Resource (BSCR) had the pleasure of hosting residents, staff and Ex-Combatants on training in Conflict Resolution, Identity and Politics. Facilitating the training were Professor Bridget Brownlow, Dr David Bourgeois from St Marys University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada and Bonnie Weir, Yale University, New Haven and Connecticut, USA.

There were twenty three students from both Universities taking part in a Q&A session on Loyalism in South Belfast with Trevor Greer and Jackie McDonald.

This gave everyone involved the chance to speak to people they wouldn't normally have the chance to. This event was made possible by the involvement of Colin Halliday from the Open Doors Project who was able to use his influence to get Ex-Combatants involved in the discussion.

Trevor Greer from BCSR said 'This will not be the last time discussions with both Universities will take place and I hope the Open Doors Project will be involved again.'



COVID - 19



Open Doors staff are helping to deliver essential items such as food, medication and PPE for the vulnerable and front line workers.

