



PEACE4YOUTH NEWS-ISSUE 2 AUTUMN 2018



AT A GLANCE

Young Voices- Something to say about Peace4Youth

The Transform Project

Journeys- Speaking Out On Mental Health

STRIVE- Personal Development Experience From A
Young Person

Amplify- Darkness Into Light

The Third Space- SEUPB Visit

Youthscape- Challenge

YouthPact is a project supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of
Children and Youth Affairs



**Northern Ireland
Executive**

www.northernireland.gov.uk

"It's good to be on the programme. It pulls you out of your comfort zone whether you know it or not. It builds your confidence. It's just amazing meeting people from your own area that I didn't know and getting to know people from other communities"

Peace4Youth Programme Participant

Young Voices- something to say about Peace4Youth

AUGUST 2018

In August 2018 YouthPact convened the first of six planned Peace4Youth Young Voices engagement and consultation events in The Junction, Dungannon.

Thirty seven young people, from eight of the then ten Peace4Youth funded projects attended and were supported by youth workers who facilitated their engagement and recorded their reflections, insights and experience.

This first Young Voices event was about capturing young people's experience of the Peace4Youth programme generally rather than reviewing/identifying individual projects. The event took an interactive and participatory approach and reflective discussions were interspersed with energisers, group activities, presentations and inputs.

Throughout the event young people shared personal stories and reflected on their unique and diverse experiences of the Peace4Youth Programme. The reflective discussions during the event revealed the value placed by young people on their individual youth workers, and affirmed the key roles of the professional as a facilitator of learning and as a positive role model. Also, the young people's overwhelmingly positive feedback on their experience of the programme is strongly affirmative of the overarching design of the initiative and also of the local implementation by delivery agents and partners across the various delivery sites.

During the event young people were also asked to consider what they felt to be the essential elements of an 'Ideal Peace4Youth Programme', their feedback covered areas such as activities, ethos, practicalities, methodologies and duration (with a view to extending it to one year).

A copy of the report from the event can be downloaded from the YouthPact Resources webpage

<http://www.cooperationireland.org/programmes/youth-education-programmes/youthpact/resource/>

YouthPact would be interested in hearing from you if you have any suggestions for a topic or theme for the next Young Voices event (in late winter) or for other future Young Voices sessions. For further information on YouthPact Young Voices please contact

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The Transform Project



In this quarter Mencap's Transform programme have focused on Personal Success and Well-being, in particular, the importance of physical health and its impact on mental health and well-being, social inclusion, and personal safety.

Both Belfast and Fermanagh Transform groups have been engaged in a range of activity to build on their relationships with staff and other Transform participants.



BELFAST COHORT:

Mencap have been working with 38 young people in the Belfast Transform project. Young people attended field trips as part of the project. In the Belfast area these have included trips to The Lyric Theatre for the "No surrender production", The Indian Community Centre and The Belfast Synagogue to explore issues of cultural and religious diversity, Kingspan stadium and Windsor Park Football ground. A Belfast bus tour taking in Harland & Wolfe shipyard, the Titanic quarter and the Falls and Shankill Roads offered the young people a chance to see their city from a different perspective and indeed to see parts of the city they had not visited before. In Belfast, project participants have had coaching sessions with Ulster Rugby, communication workshops, mindfulness sessions and interactive sessions with the Chinese Lion Dance facilitators. A group of young volunteers from North Belfast have also joined activity sessions to support those Transform participants with physical disability to participate more fully in some of the sessions. In Belfast 12 of the young people have completed OCN Level 1 in Personal Success and Wellbeing.

FERMANAGH COHORT:

In Fermanagh 18 young people are registered on the project. The young people enjoyed a visit to Orchard Acre Farm and the Fermanagh county show to learn about the local agri-food industry and its importance in the culture and life of rural Fermanagh. The young people also visited St. Michael's, St McCartan's Cathedral and Vineyard Churches to meet clergy and lay people to explore the churches and the work that they do in the local area providing community and social service. The group have also walked to various locations in Enniskillen including the Enniskillen bomb site and memorial. Participants have been trying out team games, walking and weekly sessions at the gym in the Lakeland Forum, as well as workshop sessions on relationships and consent. The young people have also visited the NI Fire Service and have accessed information sessions with the PSNI. The cohort also attended a team building residential at Carrowmena in Limavady. The programme included both outdoor activities and group building exercises that offered the young people a chance to challenge themselves and have a positive shared experience. For many of the young people it offered a first independent trip away from home without their parent/carers.

Journeys Project



YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK OUT ON MENTAL HEALTH

"There's a 6-week waiting list, but it feels like a bomb in my hand that's about to go off!"

When Billie voiced this statement, she realised she wasn't the only one who had this experience. One by one, others in her Springboard group gradually began to bravely share their story – all individual stories yet connected through a shared sense of despair and hopelessness.

Arising from their experience of suffering multiple health issues and ongoing challenges in receiving support, a group of young people from across Belfast turned their frustration into creating a documentary to help others. They shared their personal experiences of living with depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, coping with grief, living in care or drug/ alcohol misuse.

Young people questioned whether this is good enough in 2018. The foundation of good mental wellbeing is critical as young people navigate their way through life. For every individual having a healthy perspective when forming their view of themselves, each other and the world around them is essential. A simple plea emphasised in the Fusion documentary was the need for a safe space & a listening ear.

The young people took part on the FUSION programme which is part of the SEUPB PEACEIV Peace4Youth programme Journeys, which gives them the opportunity to explore personal development, good relations and citizenship. In this safe space, they courageously shared their own story and spoke of the importance of being heard, having a close network of support to help unravel the crushing turmoil that has left heavy footprints on their lives. Through shared hopes, the bond of empathy grew and helped bring understanding and a call to help others in a similar situation.

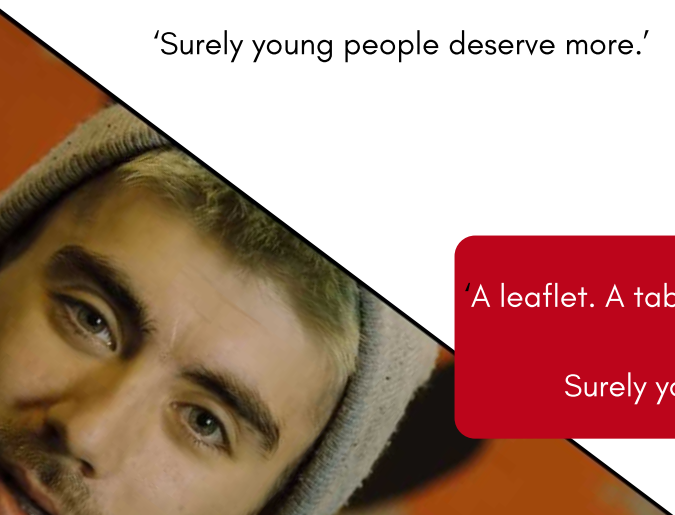
'If it wasn't for this programme, I'd either be shot or in jail.
This has now set me up for life'

There is incredible work done by counselling services, community groups, youth workers, social workers and other professionals to support these young people. However, the growing demand is undoubtedly putting a strain on much needed services.

'Surely young people deserve more.'

'I was passed about from pillar to post
and I felt like no one cared.....'

'A leaflet. A tablet. A waiting list. In 2018 Northern
Ireland, is this it?
Surely young people deserve more.'





Personal Development Experience

Strive is an intensive youth work programme led by Include Youth in partnership with Youth Initiatives, Newstart Education Centre, Northern Ireland Alternatives- North Belfast and Lifford Clonleigh Resource Centre. Here is a story of a young person on Strive explaining their experience of the personal development element of our programme...

"Before I joined the Strive programme, I didn't care about anyone, my family, friends or school. I just had this mind-set of I'm stuck in Carrick forever. When Marc and Kelly came I didn't really want to do the programme because I didn't know who these 2 random people were, but once my mates told me that they were dead on I decided to give the programme a go and I am so glad I did. Being on Strive gave me a chance to gain qualifications and do my family proud cause all I done was get in trouble either in school or the community. Kelly and Marc give me a kick up the back side that I needed and made me realise that I can do more with my life!

One of the great things about Strive is that it gave me the chance to get out of the area that I live in and experience new things like mountain biking. I'd never been out of my community, especially doing something I have an interest in. We did a 4-week programme over at Belfast Activity Centre (BAC) learning how to hit jumps and learn new skills on a bike, I loved it! Kelly organised the mountain biking to be included as a qualification, this made me try harder and I wanted to pass so much cause I didn't want to let Marc and Kelly down as they organised it all. When I received my certificate in mountain biking I felt really proud of what I had done. This was my first qualification I've ever had!

As Strive continued I went more frequently and gained more qualifications that only made me feel better about myself as I had mental health issues and my head would be away sometimes. As weeks and months went on with the healthy bodies, healthy mind programme I noticed I was getting fitter, I was pushing myself more and more to just get better, my whole mind-set has changed while I've been on Strive and I'm grateful for the support Kelly and Marc give to not only me, but my mates too as they had some issues of their own and it was good to see them changing for the better. STRIVE made me realise what I was capable off and what I could accomplish!"

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AMPLIFY KILKEEL

Darkness Into Light

Young people from Amplify Kilkeel planned and hosted 'Darkness into Light', an interactive art exhibition focusing on mental health. This visual arts project proved to be a great vehicle for young people from different backgrounds and traditions but with shared interests and concerns to work together to highlight and create greater awareness of youth mental health.

'We decided Youth Mental Health is something to talk about!! Let's raise the awareness and reduce the stigma associated with poor mental health.'

'We want young people in our local community to feel encouraged to open up and talk about their mental health.'

'Let's not bottle it up and keep it hidden, let's talk to someone. Let's ask for help!'

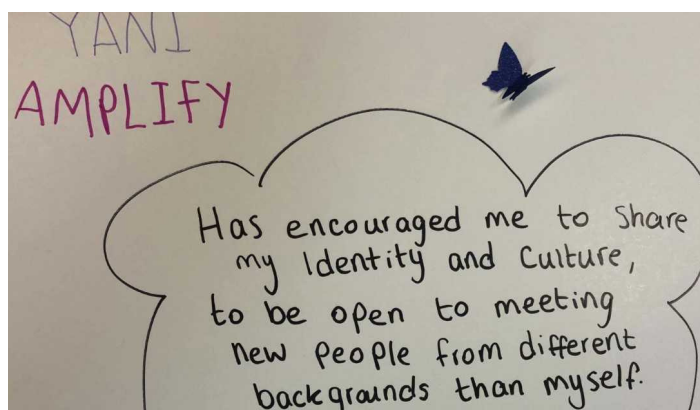
In completing research for their exhibition the young people were concerned by what they found;

- * In N.I more than 20% of young people, (1 in 5) are suffering significant mental health problems by the time they reach 18 (DHSSPS, 2010; Khan, 2016).

- * The rates of mental ill health are estimated to be 25% higher in NI than in other parts of the UK (Child and Adult Mental Health 2017 paper from NICCY).

Working together on a shared concern provided the young people with the opportunity to meet with young people from a different background to themselves, make friends and learn and understand more about the cultural diversity in the area.

'It has encouraged me to share my identity and culture, to be open to meeting new people from different backgrounds to myself.'





SEUPB VISIT THE THIRD SPACE

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) visited The Third Space in Belfast, as part of the ongoing PEACE IV project between Extern and Verbal.

The Third Space delivers a 26 week programme with 3 programme areas of personal development, good relations and citizenship to 800 marginalised young people aged between 14 and 24. The project design engages young people using a combined youth work/arts based model within a resiliency based framework to provide a transformative experience.

Gina McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer (SEUPB), and Leanne Massey, Joint Secretariat Director (SEUPB), joined our Queen Street office to meet The Third Space staff and young people from Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, and Roscor.

The event was an opportunity for people to reflect on how the programme is going so far. Participants were able to give testimonies directly to the funders, detailing how The Third Space has helped with their confidence, offered new skills, and provided the chance to meet new people and make friends.

Attendees were shown one of the videos from the project's digital storytelling strand created by Gearoid McGerry. The video showcased a moving account concerning drug use; Gearoid told the group how he was grateful to have the opportunity to tell his story, and hopefully help make a positive change in people's life, reflecting the spirit and ethos of the programme. Sharing thoughts from participants:



Jeandré from Derry said that exploring factors of personality and self-esteem had taught her to observe and take more notice, and to push her out of her comfort zone.

Mark from Belfast appreciated looking at peer pressure and culture: "I wouldn't stereotype as much now as I would have. It's changed how I look at people and their groups."

Mick, also from Belfast, felt the programme has been "class", and had helped with his confidence: "I never really knew a lot of people beforehand to be friends with them, but now I am close to other people."

Don't limit your challenges – challenge your limits



Grainne Stockton had enrolled on the Youthscape programme originally to make new friends. The young mum of two not only enjoyed her time on the programme but found pathways opening up for new experiences and opportunities. Watch Grainne speak in the 1.30 min youtube video to get a sense of the significant role Youthscape has played in this part of her journey.



Here is a link to Grainne's Youthscape story!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-PxkxE-_w0

Thank you for watching



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