

2018/19 Central Good Relations Fund

FINAL (END OF PROJECT) REPORT

Co-operation Ireland

Circle of Learning

April 2019

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1. About Co-operation Ireland

Co-operation Ireland works to promote and encourage interaction, dialogue, and practical collaboration between the peoples of Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Our Vision

Co-operation Ireland's vision is of

A peaceful and stable island where people of all backgrounds live and work together for a better future

Our Mission

Our mission is to *sustain peace by helping to build a shared and cohesive society.*

Co-operation Ireland does this by working in partnership with others in these islands to:

- Develop initiatives which address emerging challenges to peace
- Facilitate understanding, positive relationships and co-operation across these islands, building a sense of interdependence
- Create a supportive environment by building capacity, influencing policy, and developing collaboration at a strategic level
- Share our learning and experience of peace building and practical co-operation internationally

The Circle of Learning Programme

The Circle of Learning aims to ensure continuity of learning within communities by connecting those with experience and knowledge with those that are just starting out on the road of active citizenship, community organising and development. The Circle of Learning project will work on the principles of support from informal learning through networking, discussion, analysis, site visits and practical application of knowledge. The project acknowledges the experience of those that work in a voluntary capacity and using the practical co-operation to build new and sustainable links on a cross-community basis.

Circle of Learning recruited 4 host organisations in Derry/Londonderry, Mid Ulster, Ards & North Down and Lurgan known as hubs who worked with 3 marginalised groups in each area, supporting them to progress in their development and to identify and address local issues.

The programme targeted areas and groups with limited previous involvement in peace building and which continue to face challenges relating to the legacy of the conflict. The following groups and hubs took part in the project:

Ards and North Down (Hub-Ards Community Network)

- Scrabo Residents Association
- Ballygowan Down Capacity Building Initiative
- Bangor Down Capacity Building Initiative

Mid Ulster Hub (Hub-Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association)

- Garvagh Cultural Awareness Association
- Leckagh Neighbourhood Group
- Randalstown Cultural Awareness Association

Lurgan Hub (Hub- Jethro Centre)

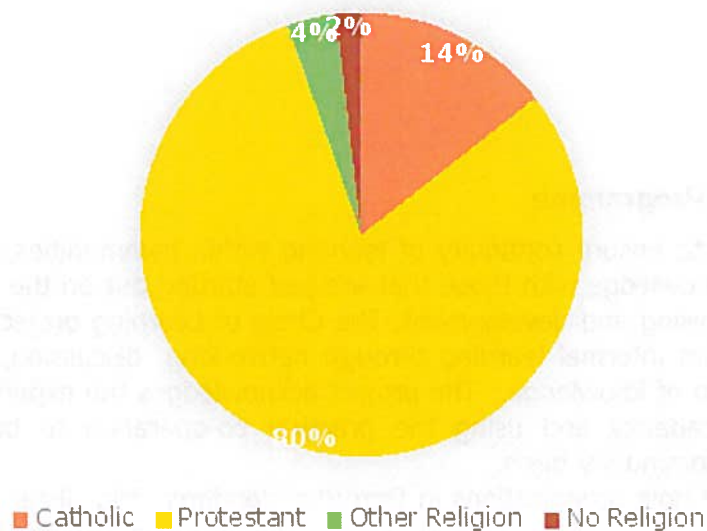
- Lurgan Town Project
- Lurgan College/St Ronan’s College Shared Education Programme
- Queen’s Street Residents Association

Derry/Londonderry Hub (Hub- Leafair Community Association)

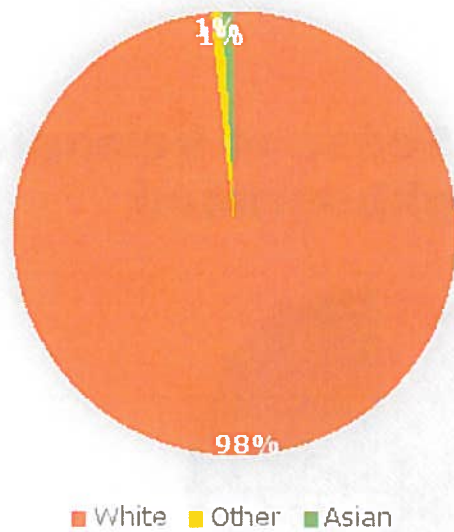
- Glenabbey Community Association
- Sringhill Park Area Residents Youth Association
- The Fountain Womens and Youth Centre

2. Profile of project participants

Profile of Project Participants- Religion

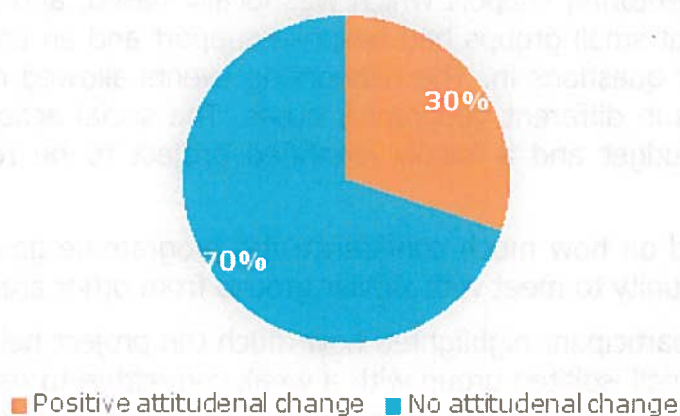


Profile of Project Participants- Ethnicity

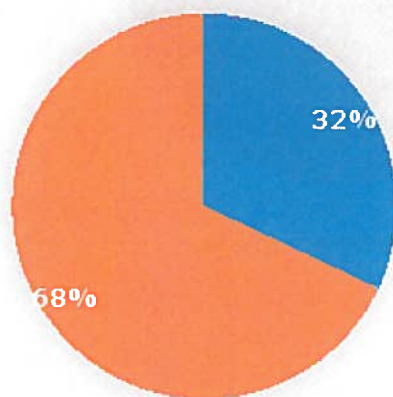


3. Attitudinal changes for overall project

I think town centres are safe and welcoming places for people from all walks of life



I Feel a Positive Sense of belonging to my Neighbourhood



■ Positive attitudinal change ■ No Attitudinal change

4. Feedback from participants

Overall the participants were highly engaged with the project and benefitted from a range of interventions. The mentoring support which was locally based, and responded to individual queries meant that small groups had bespoke support and an environment they felt comfortable in to ask questions in. The networking events allowed mentors to find out about different issues in different geographic areas. The social action projects gave ownership of a small budget and a locally identified project to be resolved or developed by local residents.

One of the groups commented on how much confidence the programme gave them to ask for support and the opportunity to meet with similar groups from other areas.

Individual feedback from one participant highlighted how much the project helped her to lead her group from being a small isolated group with a weak committee to reaching out to the hub and using the mentoring support to develop her leadership skills to steer the group in the right direction.

Another participant involved on the tour of the Crumlin Road Gaol commented on how he would never have imagined revisiting the Gaol with a member of the opposite

community and talking about their respective time in jail on opposing sides. He said it helped the healing process.

The Leafair hub mentor remarked how the flexibility of the funding allowed for small groups to develop at a pace that suited them, and how the Social Action project was 'bespoke' to their needs which a lot of funding doesn't allow for.

Feedback from a young person highlighted that the project allowed him to mix with groups in his local area, with people who he normally wouldn't have any supportive and safe opportunities to do so.

Another participant commented that "the project was exciting in its approach, and the title supports it 'learning' and would welcome more opportunities to take part again".

5. Case study

The Fountain Estate located in L/Derry city is a predominantly loyalist housing estate and suffers from high levels of deprivation, a lack of confidence to engage with public bodies and an apathy towards good relations activities. The Fountain Youth and Womens Centre was formed by a local resident to address some of the issues in the estate and is supported by Leafair Community Association, a predominantly catholic organisation, located across the city in the Shantallow area. As a hub based in the town of city of L/Derry there was an awareness of the need for a flexible social action project to develop and support the Fountain Centre, and Circle of Learning was used to carry out a baseline skills audit and devise an action plan for their social action project. The baseline audit showed experience in networking, dealing with statutory agencies, running meetings (eg minute taking, setting agenda's, role of chair etc) and dealing with good relations issues in the estate but a lack of long term strategy and activities that included both sides of the community. The group decided to organise a Christmas Carol service for the whole estate and wider community, with local primary schools (protestant, catholic and integrated), a choir made up of those who suffered from homelessness and faith organisations taking part.

Initially the concert was greeted with some scepticism, had some resistance and took some negotiation, compromise and agreement from a range of stakeholders including local residents, schools and religious representatives.

It was only through constant dialogue, reassurance and exceptional event management that all stakeholders bought into the event.

The Christmas Carol service was a huge success; it brought together a very diverse range of residents, young and old, pupils, teachers, musicians and audience members and was very well supported. Local media coverage was that it had been a positive event for the area. It did an enormous amount to raise community spirit and the group thrived at organising a successful event with full community support

6. Key Findings and Conclusions

The 2018/2019 Circle of Learning Programme successfully contributed to the provision of a network of support and building of capacity among marginalised communities across Northern Ireland. Participating groups highlighted a wide range of flexible supports and assistance provided by the hubs and mentors and also support to access training and development opportunities. Examples of skills and learning gained during the project included good governance, holding effective meetings, managing volunteers, applying for funding, and handling conflict. Most groups were able to identify specific changes that came about as result of participation in the Circle of Learning programme, and demonstrated where they had opportunities implement their learning.

Circle of Learning also successfully helped groups to network and exchange learning with groups from diverse backgrounds, both locally and across the region. Groups were also supported to develop links outside the Circle of Learning network in their wider communities. The opportunities for engagement and discussion provided by the project also contributed to addressing good relations issues and conflict legacies, creating safe spaces for new links and conversations in some areas and enabling people to attend events in areas and communities they would not previously have visited. Some of the mentors spoke of the 'spin off' developments that are taking place because smaller groups now have both the confidence and contacts to develop their capacity across the local area and the region.

The hub and mentor structure has proved a very significant element of the project, with groups greatly valuing the dedicated mentoring support which they received from more experienced community organisations in their area, often locally based mentors. One participant commented on how a local established organisation/hub who were aware of the history of issues came up with simple solutions, whereas to explain all the issues to a facilitator from outside the area would have been problematic and prolonged a resolution.

For Co-operation Ireland, the model broadened the reach of Circle of Learning by providing access to new groups within the hub's existing networks, and in some cases included previous Circle of Learning beneficiaries who were still making use of the network. The flexibility of funding available for the local action plans under the project was also a significant strength, ensuring that activities were responsive to group needs and complemented other funding streams. In Lurgan, in particular, Circle of Learning funding enabled Shankill Caring Parish Association to integrate and enhance other streams of work that were in place in the Lurgan area.

Summary of outcomes achieved

Networking

- Small low capacity groups gained confidence, support and mechanisms to meet with similar groups in a similar position from across Northern Ireland.
- The new relationships made and new contacts 'kick started' a process whereby the groups liaised with others on a range of issues and asked for advice and support on funding, committee development, areas of concern and community development practises.
- Individuals travelled to places and communities they wouldn't normally have visited.
- Many of the small groups were made up of volunteers who had flexibility within the programmes networking events to help them fully participate in the programme. Some events were organised at evenings and weekends to allow for flexibility.

Social Action Projects

- A relatively small amount of money (£725) meant that a local issue was identified and addressed by the groups in the network and groups felt they provided real value for money. Many groups felt they had achieved a lot for a modest sum of money.
- The social action project allowed groups to show their local communities that they were committed and serious about improving good relations in the area.
- The management of a budget, learning how to administer public funds, good governance and financial systems was a good learning curve for groups.

Mentor and Hub Support

- The mentors and hubs had local knowledge on how best to approach local conflict, agree a suitable social action projects and weren't seen as 'outsiders' coming in to give advice.
- Mentors and hubs were able to provide expert advice, access to regional wide groups, funding opportunities and general support at a more strategic level.
- Mentors and hubs challenged small groups on tackling contentious issues and encouraged small groups to evaluate their work on a regular basis.
- Mentors attended networking events and so were given the opportunity to meet and compare groups progress and make further linkages.

Pictures of Activities







2018/19 Central Good Relations Fund

Please refer to instructions in Guidelines

FINAL PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES, PARTICIPANTS, TARGETS AND OUTCOMES FROM ANNEX C IN YOUR LETTER OF OFFER

Group Name: Co-operation Ireland

Project Name: Circle of Learning

Amount awarded: £60,000

Have the activities and targets been delivered?

THESE ARE THE ACTIVITIES LISTED IN ANNEX C IN THE LETTER OF OFFER. PLEASE DO NOT CHANGE THE 'GREYED' OUT AREA IN THE TABLE BELOW. YOU MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING COLUMNS:

“How much did you do? - Date activity took place” (copy from Ongoing Progress Report)

“How much did you do? – Details of the activity” (copy from Ongoing Progress Report)

“How much did you do – Number of participants and community split” (copy from Ongoing Progress Report)

“Rationale if targets not met”

Activity Description	Target Date	Output Measure: How much will you do?	How much did you do? Date activity took place	How much did you do? Details of activity	How much did you do? Number participants at community split
<p>Circle of Learning</p> <p>A networking and capacity building project to support marginalised groups to engage in good relations activities. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of mentoring support. (Mentors will have relevant experience in working with low capacity groups on good relations and contentious issues. Each mentor will have an allocated time to work with groups. Level of involvement will vary depending on needs of group.) - Design and delivery of local good relations action plans. (Local action plans are identified by each of the 12 groups to address an action from their baseline skills audit. The proposal and 	<p>April 2018- March 2019</p>	<p>100 participants 50% CNR / 50% PUL</p> <p>4 hubs selected to support 3 local capacity groups each from Derry/Londonderry, Mid and East Antrim, Lurgan and North Down</p>	<p>July 2018- Identification and selection of four hubs</p> <p>September 2018 12 Low capacity groups recruited on to programme.</p>	<p>4 hubs located in target areas were selected on a 50:50 cross community basis and 12 local low capacity groups were identified to partake on the programme. Professional mentors were assigned to each group. Participant numbers are approx. 150+.</p> <p>Ards and North Down (Hub - Ards Community Network)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scrabo Residents Association - Ballygowan Down Capacity Building Initiative - Bangor Down Capacity Building Initiative <p>Mid Ulster Hub (Hub - Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garvagh Cultural Awareness Association - Leckagh Neighbourhood Group - Randalstown Cultural Awareness Association <p>Lurgan Hub (Hub - Jethro Centre)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lurgan Town Project - Lurgan College/St Ronan's College Shared Education Programme - Queen's Street Residents Association <p>Derry/Londonderry Hub (Hub - Leafair Community Association)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glenabbey Community Association - Sringhill Park Area Residents Youth Association - The Fountain Womens and Youth Centre 	<p>12 groups (7PUL and 5CNR) took part due geography of hubs;</p> <p>L/Derry Hub –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 CNR groups an • 1 PUL group <p>Mid Ulster Hub -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 PUL groups an • 1CNR group <p>Lurgan -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 CNR groups an • 1 PUL group <p>N Down/Ards -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 PUL groups <p>In total 110+ participants split approx. 70:30 PUL:CI</p>

<p>budget is agreed with mentors and Co-operation Ireland before commencement. (Action plan may include projects such as training required for committee, a community event, small pieces of equipment needed to run programmes or provide services and may be used to secure additional funding from other sources to address an issue on a larger scale action plan. This will give groups experience in managing a small amount of funding - administration, compiling claims, learning about financial systems and procedures with public funds. Groups may join together to complete a joint action plan);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-community site visits; - Networking events/meetings; 	<p>12 groups receive professional mentoring support</p> <p>Mentors to: assist with baseline skills audit and action plans to design and assist in the delivery of the local action plans; provide appropriate solutions to queries from groups; be responsible, in conjunction with Co-operation Ireland, for developing networking and collaborative opportunities for those on the project.</p> <p>20+ one-to-one and hub network meetings</p> <p>12 local action plans delivered</p>	<p>August 2018 Mentors identified appointed</p> <p>Social Action projects took place between Sept 2018 and March 2019</p> <p>One to one & hub meetings took place on: 1/8/18, 23/8/18, 30/8/18, 12/9/18, 15/10/18, 12/11/18, 4/1/19, 8/2/19, 27/2/19, 11/3/19,</p>	<p>Mentors have assisted low capacity groups with baseline skills audits and local action plans were implemented through social action projects.</p> <p>25 one - to - one meetings and hub meetings were completed.</p> <p>The social action projects included: (1) the instillation of a bench at unmarked graves of those buried from Lurgan Workhouse to honor people from both communities who had little means. The unveiling of the bench was attended by local Lord Mayor, members of both communities, groups on the CoL programme and local clergy from both sides of the community.</p> <p>(2) A Christmas Choral event in St Columbs Cathedral for the community in the Fountain Estate and surrounding areas in L/Derry by local primary schools, a choir made up of homeless people and groups participating in the CoL project.</p> <p>(3) An Open Conversations Event in Lurgan to reconnect groups working in Lurgan where there isn't a forum for local groups to have facilitated conversations about local and regional issues affecting and assisting their work.</p> <p>(4) A tour of Derry/Londonderry (Bogside, Walls, Mural etc) with debates and workshops afterwards and a testimony of a victim of the conflict for young people from 3 different schools in Lurgan.</p> <p>(5) Six groups with low capacity and relatively new committees used their social action budget of £725 complete training in governance, financial systems, child protection, attain</p>
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<p>Residentials</p>	<p>2 Residentials with representation from all 12 groups and 4 hubs</p> <p>6 events in places of historical and cultural significance for the whole network</p>	<p>25/3/19, 27/3/19, 29/3/19</p> <p>Belfast Residential - 10th + 11th Jan 2019 – Jurys Inn Derry/Londonderry</p>	<p>charitable status, strategic planning etc.</p> <p>(6) Purchase of small items of equipment to allow groups to deliver training, hire out rooms for meetings, run a youth club. Meetings were held in hub centres-Leafair Community Association, Lurgan Jethro Centre, Mid Ulster Sperrin Cultural Awareness Association and Ards Community Network offices and in low capacity groups centres such as Strabane and Fountain Estate. Meetings included evaluation forms, CoL paperwork such as Baseline Audit, Pre & Post Project skills audit, Mentors reports, financial guidelines, budget updates and progress towards main CoL programme objectives.</p> <p>Hubs represented included Sperrins, Leafair, Ards and Lurgan. Residential agenda was Introductions and Ice breakers with Mediate NI, Issues in your Community Workshop, Small group workshops on how each area tackles good relations, workshops facilitated by Cultural Issues and Blumoss on what can we improve as groups and who can help us improve good relations and the capacity of our groups.</p> <p>Hubs represented were Leafair, Ards and Sperrins. Agenda was (1) Introductions by Mediate NI (2) Funders Clinic with CRC, NICVA, National Lottery Community Fund and Social Economy NI giving presentations and Q&A sessions. (3) Key note address by Dr Phil Brennan-Social Justice Advocate and motivational speaker on what keeps volunteers motivated in the Community & Voluntary Sector. and (4) Keynote address by John Loneragan retired governor of Mountjoy Prison on changing peoples lives.</p> <p>Belfast Residential Total attendees 18, spread over 2 days/4 workshops. 4 hubs represented but not all small low capacity groups had representation due to work commitments of volunteers.</p>	<p>18 Participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 30% • PUJ – 65% • Other – 5% <p>27 Participants</p>
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		<p>Residential – 21st and 22nd Mar 19 – City Hotel Derry.</p> <p>Museum of Orange Heritage – 13/12/18</p> <p>REACT – 18/02/19</p> <p>Lurgan Town Project – 21/11/18</p> <p>Radar Centre – 01/10/18</p> <p>St Columbs Cathedral L/Derry – 6/12/18</p>	<p>L/Derry Residential Total attendees 27, not all stayed overnight and 3 hubs represented.</p> <p>5 events organised. A 6th event had to be cancelled due to low availability of participants.</p> <p>Events were held in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum of Orange Heritage, • REACT (Armagh) • Lurgan Town Project, • Radar Centre, Belfast and • St Columbs Cathedral L/Derry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 40% • PUL – 55% • Other – 5% <p>Museum of Orange Heritage, 13 participants in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 75% • PUL – 25% • Other – 0% <p>REACT (Armagh) 9 participants in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 60% • PUL – 30% • Other – 10% <p>Lurgan Town Project, 60 participants in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 50% • PUL – 40% • Other – 10% <p>Radar Centre, Belfast and 6 participants in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 75% • PUL – 25% • Other – 0% <p>St Columbs Cathedral L/Derry. 250 participants in total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNR – 40 • PUL – 40 • Other – 20
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Rationale if targets not met						
The only target not met was six Networking Events, five events took place. Six events were organised but the final event had to be cancelled due to lack of availability of participants. The event was centred around Bre and how it would impact Northern Ireland specifically. No costs were incurred as a result of the event cancellation.						

Completion rates

- Total number of CRN at start of your project 30
- Total number of CRN at end of your project 30
- Total number of PUL at start of your project 70
- Total number of PUL at end of your project 70
- Total number of Other at start of your project 6
- Total number of Other at end of your project 6
- *Total of 4 participants identified as having no religion*

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AT START OF PROJECT 110

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AT END OF PROJECT 110

Appendix C

Agreed TEO Questionnaire template(s) – *for information only*

Unique participant code:	URN	
How would you describe your religious background?	REL	Catholic Protestant No religion Other
How would you describe your ethnic background?	ETH	Asian Black White Mixed Other
I understand the purpose of the T:BUC camp/GR programme that I am participating in	UND	1 0 Yes No
I feel positive about participating in a T:BUC camp/GR Programme	POS	1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree Strongly agree
I think that T:BUC camps/GR Programme could play a role in bringing (young) people from different backgrounds together	ROL	1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree Strongly agree
I think town centres are safe and welcoming places for people from all	SC9	1 2 3 4 5

walks of life		Strongly disagree	Strongly agree
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I feel a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood	CB1	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly agree
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Do you feel the programme has helped you?	SAT1	1 Yes	0 No
Do you feel you were treated well during the programme?	SAT2	1 Yes	0 No

Chair or Secretary Signature :

J Copeland

JOSEPH COPELAND

CONVANY SECRETARY

Dated:

3/9/19

