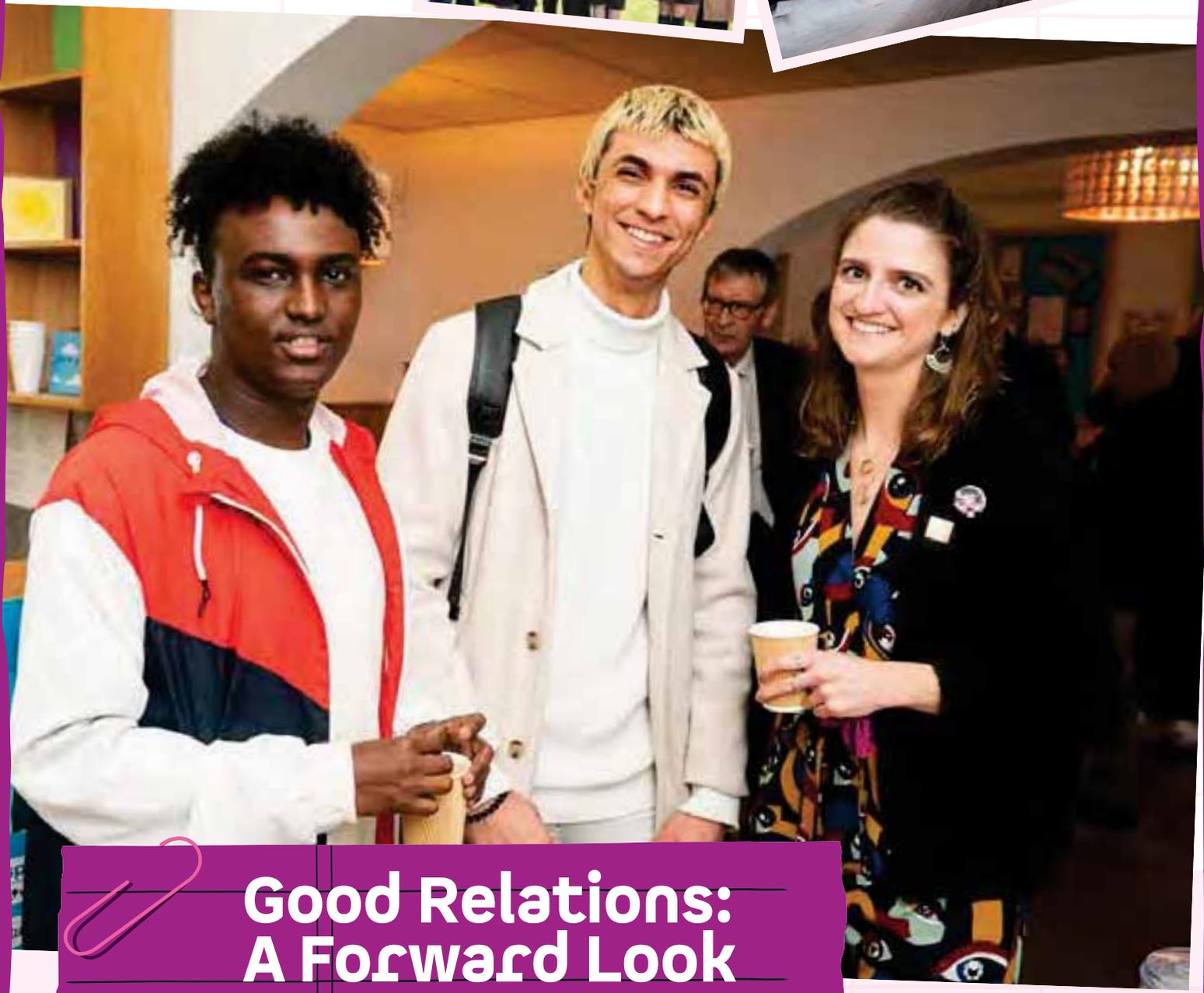


# T:buc

Changing for the better, together



## Good Relations: A Forward Look *June 2023*

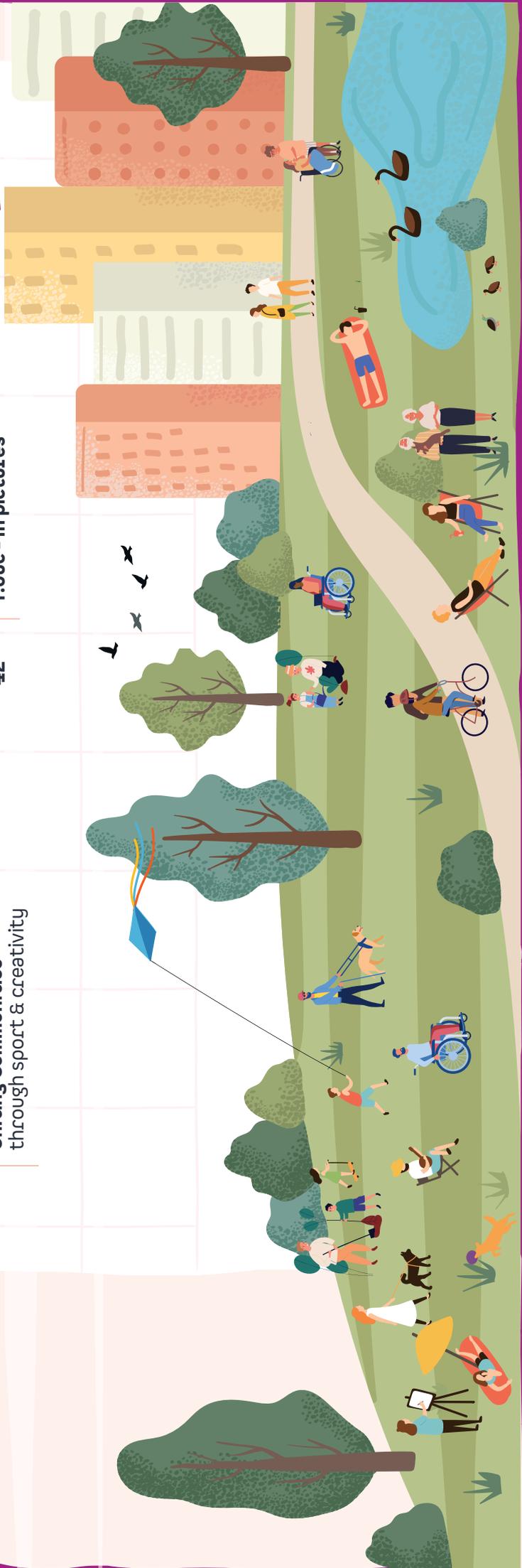


Northern Ireland  
Executive

# Contents

## Good Relations: A Forward Look June 2023

4	Foreword	18	United Youth
5	CRC News Stories	20	Urban Villages Initiative Building our safe and connected community
8	Rolling Out the Red Carpet for Peace with Community Relations In Schools (CRIS)	24	Shared Education Campuses
11	NextGen Highlights Issues for Young People Today   Springboard Opps	28	Shared Housing Programme
12	T:buc Camps Programme	36	Peace IV and Peace Plus
14	Planned Interventions Programme	38	Central Good Relations Fund
16	Uniting Communities through sport & creativity	40	District Council Good Relations Programme
		42	T:buc - in pictures



## Foreword



I am delighted to present the latest issue of the T:buc Engagement Forum newsletter. This issue includes some good news stories and examples of projects that have been delivered through various funding streams. It is fantastic to see the effects had on so many strands of our community by the commitment to the delivery of innovative, interesting and impactful cross-community activities.

The theme of today's Engagement Forum is 'Good Relations: A Forward Look'. As many of you may be aware from the last time we got together, T:buc is 10 years old. We have had 10 years of delivery which has seen significant progress made in key thematic areas and engaged thousands of people across society. The past 10 years has also seen a lot of change. Change in our world, change in our communities and change in day-to-day life. So, with that in mind we have been working on a review of the current T:buc Strategy.

Today, I will talk about some of the emerging findings from our engagement to date and you will then have the chance to provide your views on T:buc. This is an opportunity to shape the next phase of Good Relations delivery and your perspective of what worked well and where improvements could be made will be invaluable.

We will also hear about Good Relations opportunities through the PEACE PLUS programme, which represents a significant investment here

In other Good Relations news, Good Relations Week 2023 has been launched. The theme for this year's celebration is 'Together' and this will be showcased through a week-long programme of event focused on co-operation, inclusivity and progress from Monday 18th – Sunday 24th September.

With the economic challenges and uncertainties we currently face, now more than ever we need to work together to help create a positive future for everyone within our society and I encourage local community groups, voluntary organisations, representative groups, statutory bodies, business, local Councils and everyone in between to participate and register their events before the deadline of Friday 1st September 2023. In the spirit of this year's theme, I am particularly keen to encourage collaboration and partnerships in the delivery of joined up events.

**On behalf of both the Executive Office and the Community Relations Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank for you coming along today and I hope you enjoy the event.**

*Chris Gardner*

Head of T:buc & Good Relations Division  
The Executive Office

## CRC News Stories

### Syrian artist seeking sanctuary forging positive community relations in ground-breaking arts project

A Syrian artist who fled the war-torn country is now delivering arts workshops to teenagers in a local school while she seeks asylum.

Seba Barhoum (39) has been alone as a refugee in Belfast for the last 12 months but is one of many musicians and artists seeking asylum who have been forging vibrant new relationships in Northern Ireland thanks to a ground-breaking programme, funded by the CRC's Community Relations / Cultural Diversity Small Grants Scheme.

The Musicians Artists At Risk Resettlement Scheme (MARRS) project was originally set up by the Beyond Skin arts initiative in response to the Afghanistan crisis through collaborative work with the International Campaign for Afghanistan's Musicians.

But following requests from musicians in asylum seeking and refugee status from other countries, Beyond Skin has now expanded the project to people from many countries wishing to avail of support through music, as well as adults and children wishing to engage in creative activities for mental health, learning English and opportunities to meet other communities.

Afghanistan crisis, the group focused on providing an extra layer of support to musicians and artists coming to our shores, many of whom were living isolated in hotels.

They developed projects that would help musicians and artists to forge connections with their counterparts in Northern Ireland as well as minority ethnic communities here.

One project saw refugee musicians spending an evening with musicians from the Shankill Road Defenders Flute Band, sharing pizzas, playing instruments, and talking about music.



While in Syria, Seba had been a professor of art and had taught art in school as well as being an artist herself.

"My family dispersed to several countries because of the war. My parents went to Saudi Arabia, and I'm here in Belfast alone, and I have a sister who lives with her husband in a city in England," she says.

"We left our country because of war, ignorance, oppression, and oppression against women and preventing them from having a decent life within a terrorist mind. We fled for fear of being robbed of our dignity and freedom."

After escaping Syria, Seba lived in Greek Cyprus for four years and says it was a difficult time because of the racism and humiliation involved in simply getting your daily food to survive.

"Now for 12 months, I've lived in Belfast. I don't feel alone, nor a refugee, nor have I received any bad treatment. On the contrary, I feel that I belong to this place for a long time, and people made me feel like I belong as a citizen," Seba says.

Beyond Skin CEO Darren Ferguson says that after the

"It was a great opportunity for people to meet others coming to our shores, meet them face to face and get people together to collaborate," Darren says.

"Through this programme, people seeking asylum are integrating really fast because they're meeting different communities and getting out of the UK Home Office controlled accommodation and meeting people. That integration just doesn't happen if you're not meeting people.

"We're trying to make sure that in that room are people from local communities and from the settled ethnic minority communities meeting people who are seeking asylum to do something creative together. It's the way it needs to go to deal with people's fears and stereotypes."

Seba was living in a hotel in Belfast for around four months before moving into a shared house but had been unable to do any teaching and wasn't recognised as an artist.

Her contact with Beyond Skin came about through joining the Guitar Club and initiative that is part of MARRS. Darren says.

"We had a wonderful moment when Seba visited Start Together Studios where we had a professional recording session happening," he says.

"During a break and despite Seba knowing only one chord on the guitar, we gave Seba a chance to be recorded professionally. The producer

and engineer treated her no differently than any professional musician and set up microphones and sound and recorded her playing along to other musicians using one chord.

"For me that is the essence of all our work - the message that no matter your abilities or social status you are special."

Since taking part in MARRS, Seba has begun teaching art in a series of community and school workshops. The most recent was when she led an art workshop at Integrated College Glengormley teaching a number of different techniques to the Welcome Club, a group set up within the school for children who have come to Northern Ireland seeking sanctuary.

"For Seba, it has been a huge confidence boost and good for her mental health. She has been able to leave the refugee label at the door," Darren says.

Seba says that through Beyond Skin she has had the freedom and opportunity to teach art and been recognised as a professional artist.

"I am practising all my hobbies that I love and with great appreciation from the people here," she says.

"This Belfast place has made me feel alive. I am grateful for everything in Belfast that has made me move forward towards a free and dignified life. I thank the people here and I thank God for the opportunity he gave me to come here."

MARRS is making a massive difference in people's lives, enabling professional musicians and artists to develop and exercise their skills which both helps their mental health and process of integration, Darren says.

"Meanwhile on the flipside

from settled communities' lens, it is helping people to recognise people seeking sanctuary by their gifts and skills - not identified by their refugee status - while also using the arts as an inclusive platform for shared learning, creative exchange, trust and relationship building."

The CRC's Community Relations / Cultural Diversity Small Grants/Voluntary groups support to community/voluntary groups throughout Northern Ireland to help develop their capacity to engage in community relations work and supporting the Executive's commitment to continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.



Syrian Artist, Seba Barhoum with her drawing

# Rolling Out the Red Carpet for Peace with Community Relations In Schools (CRIS)

*School-based grass roots peacebuilding recognised, celebrating the impact of friendships across Shankill and Ardoyne communities*

The red carpet was rolled out for a silver screen celebration of peacebuilding and the lasting impact of friendships developed across the Shankill and Ardoyne communities in Belfast.

A movie theatre at Cityside Belfast was packed with parents, teachers, children, education professionals and government department officials to celebrate 25 years of peace and friendship for the Buddy Up system developed by Community Relations In Schools (CRIS).

CRIS is supported by the Community Relations Council through its Core Funding Scheme.

Also happening at this popcorn event, which took place on Thursday 30 March 2023, a new educational resource was launched by the peacebuilding charity.

The digital resource aims to support wider implementation of inter-school Buddy systems into all Nursery and Primary Schools involved in Shared Education, a key aim of the Tibuc (Together: Building a United Community) strategy.

## Be Inspired

CRIS, a peacebuilding charity operating for almost 40 years, hosted the Be Inspired event and unveiled a new film to showcase the impact of the inter-school Buddy system with pupils, schools and the wider community through the active and meaningful involvement of parents, carers and other local community partners.

The film told the remarkable story of how, 25 years ago, Buddy Up was started by two courageous North Belfast Nursery School Principals from Holy Cross Nursery in Ardoyne and Edenderry Nursery on the Shankill, inspired by the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the prospect of peace for the next generation of children.

The Be Inspired film captured with eloquence the power of relationships to transcend division and the many structures in Northern Ireland that maintain such separation.

It illustrated how natural it is for children to make friendships, the joy of making a buddy across lines of interface, and how parents, carers and school staff can participate in very accessible grass roots peacebuilding, influenced and heartened by the ease with which the children in their care connect with new friends.

The event, compered by Nuala McKeever, involved a programme of speakers, suitably uplifting as the audience heard from children from Sacred Heart Boys' Primary and Ballysillan Primary who are involved in the Buddy Up programme, their teachers, and parent ambassadors who were involved in the Nursery School Programme with CRIS over ten years ago and who still remain close friends.

Parent ambassadors spoke about the longevity of impact their experience of the programme had on them. How the development of trust and relationships can diminish fear about crossing over into another community, and how their children can live in a new context that is gradually emerging where friendship across lines of division can be normal and common place.

Nuala Mc Keever re-iterated the sentiment expressed by many parents present by saying, "So it's about you being you and me being me and that's OK."





People displaying a cake to celebrate 25th Anniversary of 'Buddy Up' programme

The overwhelming experience of those involved with the programme was that having different cultural identities was not an impediment to the fostering of connections and peace.

In her opening remarks, Lisa Bennett-Dietrich OBE (CRIS CEO) said:

"The social change demonstrated through this wider partnership is only the beginnings of what is possible.

"At CRIS we believe that many feet stepping forward in the same direction over time has the potential to create the necessary transformation towards a more shared society where everyone has equal opportunity, and where all communities can flourish."

## Free Educational Resource

CRIS has been working with the Northern Ireland Executive Office since

**2018**  
to bring the Buddy Up model to

**40**

schools across the

**5**  
Urban Village areas across Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

"The Good Friday Agreement, and educational schemes like Buddy Up, are about working on removing those walls - especially the ones in our minds - and replacing them with bridges. Reaching out to other people. Communicating."

## NextGen Highlights Issues for Young People Today | Springboard Opps

### Leading and Learning



Young People participating in NextGen Scheme

For those involved in NextGen, it has allowed them to develop their capacity to lead as well as learn how to explore and facilitate the views of other young people through devising and delivering training.

And together the panel of 12 Youth Ambassadors has been working closely with young people from disadvantaged areas across Belfast. Members of the advisory group provide peer mentoring, as well as setting up youth panels on issues of interest.

Young people were given the opportunity to make their voices heard on issues that matter most to them through a new Springboard Opps initiative.

NextGen is a youth-led advisory group composed of participants from across Springboard programmes.

The Community Relations Council supports Springboard Opps through its Core Funding Scheme.

### Panel Workshops

Armed with these findings, the panel spent months developing and conducting workshops to address each of the top four concerns.

These provided participants aged between 18-25 years - many of whom have battled their own complex issues - with a platform to voice their opinions and ideas, while also creating solutions.

It is now hoped that the outcome of their work can be used to influence decision makers, allowing policy to be designed in a way that can cater directly to the needs of Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged youth.

Running from January to December 2022, the year-long programme kicked off with an extensive survey developed by the youth panel to identify the most common issues faced by youth today.

Over 80 young people responded, and the results highlighted four main issues identified by today's youth: body image; mental health; unemployment; and debt/poverty.

## Giving Youth a Voice

The NextGen survey results are available to view here: <https://springboard-nextgen.co.uk/>



# T:buc Headline Actions Updates

## T:buc Camps Programme



### Programme Summary

The T:buc Camps Programme provides opportunities for young people aged 11 to 19 to come together to build positive relationships across divided parts of our community. The camps challenge historic positions, encourage debate and discussion and provide a way for young people to get to know each other, try new experiences, have fun and help to build longer term relationships. Camps are delivered on a cross- community basis.

### Programme News

#### T:buc Camp Ambassador wins Leadership Award at Derry Credit Union Young People's Awards

One of our T:buc Camp Ambassadors, Jessica Nicholl, was recently honoured by Derry Credit Union at their 2023 Young People's Awards.

Having received the Leadership Award, the following article about Jessica was published in Derry Now:

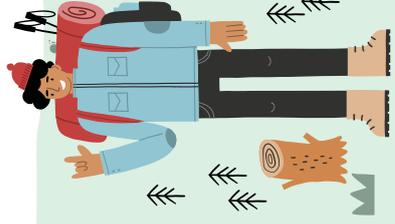
"She has grown from a shy, timid girl to a natural leader as a result of her experiences with the cross-community group T:buc. As one of twenty T:buc Ambassadors for N Ireland for the past four years, she has briefed Stormont ministers and officials at the Education Authority about the issues affecting young people today.

Recently she travelled to Croatia and Bosnia to represent NI as part of this group. There she met with youth groups to share experiences and ideas to inspire the next generation to make change and be the difference their country needs. She met with mayors and ambassadors to voice her opinions of peacebuilding there and at home.

She is now a T:buc mentor for new ambassadors joining the programme to help them to develop their leadership skills.

Jessica joined her local youth club at the Vale Centre when she was just aged 12 and became a youth leader, working at various events and summer schemes. Thanks to Jessica, the centre now has a successful Off the Streets programme with 50 members.

This leadership role has taught her the importance of inclusivity, as she believes all young people of all backgrounds, cultures and abilities should access the same opportunities. She was also recently nominated for the Good Relations Youth Award for under 25's.



As a leader, she has completed training in First Aid, Safeguarding, Child Protection, Disability Sport NI Autism and sports coaching, and completed judging courses and courses in sign language. She has coached gymnastics for five years to children of different abilities. Her coaching experience has earned her the Millennium Volunteer Award and the Pramerica Spirit of Community Award.

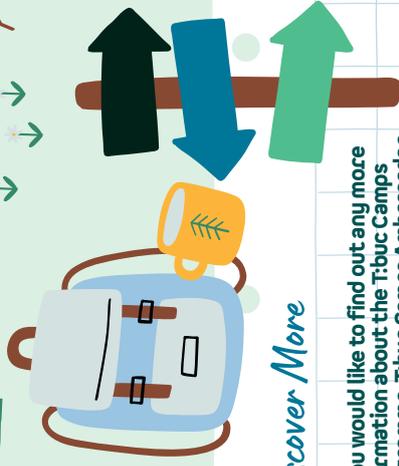
Jessica has also contributed to her school community, holding multiple positions of leadership in school and sports teams where she was captain, Junior Deputy Head girl, Eco and Bus Monitor, Class Councillor and a Wellness Ambassador."

I had the opportunity to congratulate Jessica on receiving her award and she said:

"I can never truly explain how much TBUC means to me. It has honestly been life changing and I don't know what I would do without it. I am so honoured to be a part of such an amazing programme for young people."



**Jessica Nicholl**  
T:buc Camp Ambassador



### Discover More

If you would like to find out any more information about the T:buc Camps Programme, T:buc Camps Ambassador Programme or any of our Good Relations Programmes, please click on the link below.

The Education Authority (EA) act as Programme Administrator for the T:buc Camps Programme on behalf of TEO

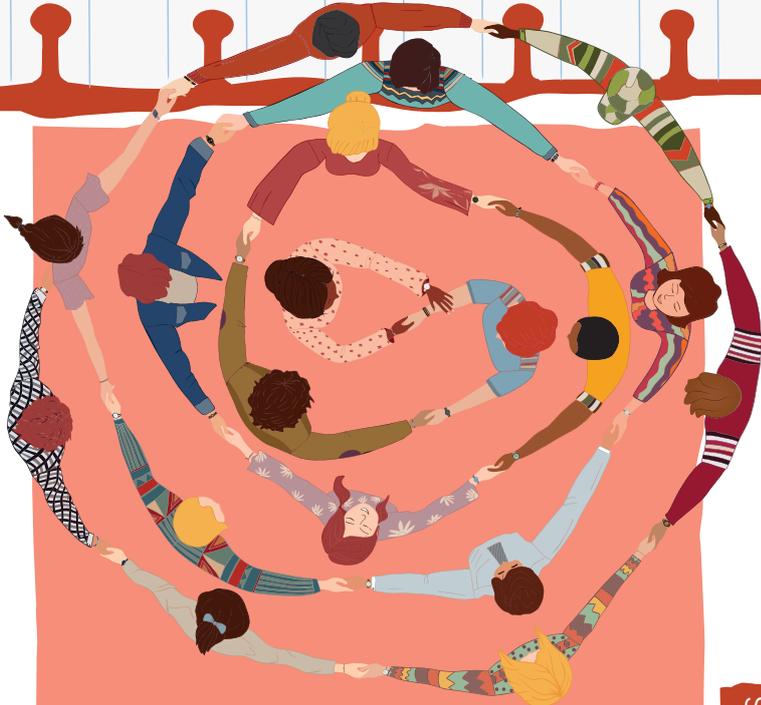
<https://www.eani.org.uk/tbuc>



# Planned Interventions Programme

## Programme summary

Delivered annually as part of the Executive's wider "Together: Building a United Community (Tibuc) Strategy", the Executive Office's Planned Interventions Programme provides funding for community activity to divert young people from anti-social and potentially criminal behaviour around contentious parades and public assemblies, and to deal with heightened tension around interfaces during the summer period. The Planned Interventions Programme is administered by the Education Authority.



## Programme News

### Planned Interventions Project playing an important role with young people in Kilkenny

TEO's David Hawkins talks about his visit to a Planned Interventions Project to see first-hand the excellent work being delivered in Kilkenny by Schomberg House.

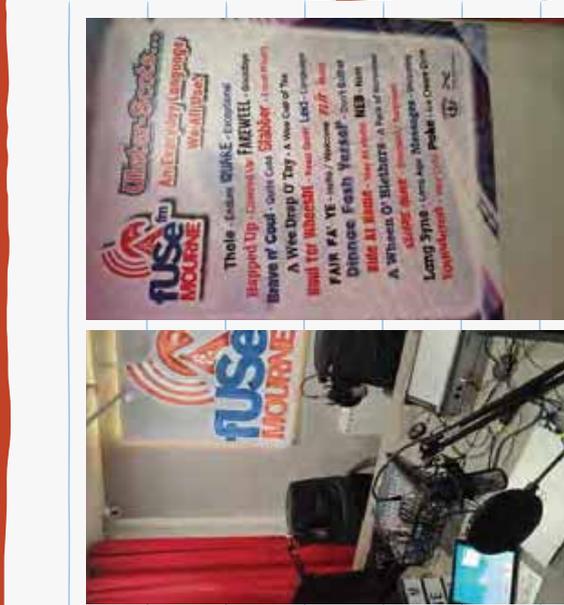
"I travelled to Schomberg House in Kilkenny, a local hub for learning and education around many aspects of Ulster-Scots heritage – history, language,

music and dancing, to observe the delivery of their TEO funded Planned Interventions Project.

The aim of the Planned Interventions Programme is to provide alternative activities for young people at risk of engaging in negative behaviours during periods of heightened tension, as part of the Executive's wider 'Together: Building a United Community' (Tibuc) Strategy.

The Programme is funded by TEO and delivered in partnership with the Department of Education and the Education Authority. It is managed within TEO by District Councils, Camps and Planned Interventions (DCI) Branch.

On my arrival I received a tour of the centre. It is a fascinating combination of the old and the new. Depictions of historical events, all created by local



Young People at Schomberg House

artists cover the walls, while dancing uniforms and musical instruments are prominent throughout. There is also a radio studio that broadcasts Ulster-Scots music and stories from the local community at certain times of the year.

The Project brought young people together to discuss issues relating to their local community, such as anti-social behaviour and crime, and educated them on the negative outcomes these activities have on the community and the young people themselves. The young people were very positive about the role the Society plays in providing a safe space for them, as a place to learn and also engage in recreational activities, using their time constructively.

The evening drew to a close with pizza and refreshments being enjoyed by all. It was a privilege to visit the Schomberg Society and to get a glimpse into some of the work they do in their local community. If you would like to know more about the Planned Interventions Programme, further information can be found on the TEO website."



# Uniting Communities through sport & creativity

## Programme summary

The Uniting Communities Programme uses sport, physical, and creative activity to break down divisions in society and deliver and embed key good relations messages with an emphasis on tackling sectarianism, racism and promoting equality of opportunity.



## Programme News

### Legacy

On 18 February young people from Lurgan/Portadown and South Belfast came together for the first time as part of a joint event at Ulster University Jordanstown. Over 80 young people enjoyed a high energy activity day aimed at challenging the young people to develop positive friendships and developing confidence amongst participants. Supporting delivery of the sessions were 10 Young Leaders and 3 Ambassadors who planned and led all sessions. This was a fantastic opportunity to put into practice their training and further develop their skills enabling them to forge stronger friendships with those from diverse community backgrounds.



Young People at the joint event in Ulster University, Jordanstown enjoying a high energy activity day.

### Legacy

On 16 March Scotch Street Youth and Community Centre held a celebration event for the young people aged 11-16 in the Lurgan and Portadown area who were actively involved in the T:buc Uniting Communities through Sport and Creativity Programme, which was delivered in partnership with Oasis Youth Club and Healthy Kidz. The event was also attended by Local Councillors, MLAs, schools, representatives from the Craigavon Foodbank and parents and Young Leaders from the Lurgan and Portadown Young Leaders Training and Ambassador's Programme.



Young People from SSVCC receiving their certificates at the celebration event upon completion of the Uniting Communities Programme.

### Employment

T:buc Ambassador Aaron Smith won the Good Relations Youth Award 2023. Aaron won the new Youth Award category which was added this year and which celebrates young people under the age of 25 who are delivering positive good relations work in their community and across the region. Aaron has gone full circle on the T:buc Programme; from initially a Young Leader on the Uniting Colin and Eastside project, progressing to a Tibuc Ambassador on our Uniting Communities through Sport & Creativity Programme and finally securing employment as a Youth Mentor on the current T:buc Uniting South Belfast project. Winning this award is a marvellous achievement and testament to the fantastic work he has completed in that time.



Aaron Smith with his Good Relations Youth Award 2023

### Legacy

Members of the Tibuc team were proud to join Young Leaders from the Uniting Communities through Sport and Creativity Programme to celebrate their graduation in style. The event was held on Wednesday 22nd March at PWC, Merchant Square, Belfast and was attended by over 100 guests including 42 Young Leaders. The event celebrated the progression and achievements of the Young Leaders from South Belfast and Lurgan/Portadown who have engaged in the programme over the past 14 months and who have passed their bespoke T:buc OCN Level 2 Uniting Communities through Leadership Award.



Young Leaders at the celebration event receiving their OCN Level 2 Uniting Communities through Leadership Award.

### Further information:

If you have any questions please contact:

[t:buc@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:t:buc@communities-ni.gov.uk)

If you want to know more about the Uniting Communities Programme, check out the website:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/uniting-communities-tbuc>

# United Youth

## Programme summary

United Youth is aligned with the vision and objectives of United Youth as set out in the Tibuc Strategy. The programme focuses on supporting participants to develop capabilities in the areas of personal development, good relations and citizenship, ultimately enhancing their employability and improving their life chances.

Between 2017-2022

# 11

major projects delivered this commitment via the PEACE IV funded Peace4Youth Programme.



## Programme News

Overall, the Peace4Youth programme **exceeded its target** and had a clear, positive impact on the young people who have taken part.

The programme was evaluated by Queens University Belfast who found that the majority

# around 75%

of young people indicated that they had clear plans for their future, with employment being the most popular destination for completers. Returning to education and involvement in another programme also ranked highly amongst the onward destinations.

Young people showed considerable growth and though once marginalised, had plans to **engage with society** in a meaningful way.

Over

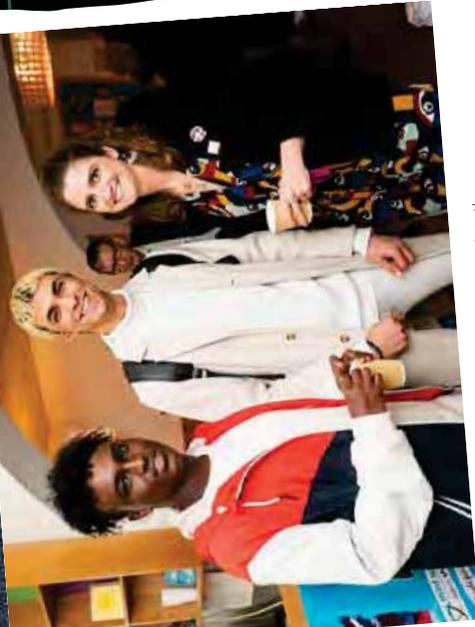
# 7,900

young people completed the programme and over

# 3,200

of those availed of the participant incentive payments.

A successor Programme (to be funded via the new PEACE PLUS programme), has been developed to complete and **exceed the fulfilment** of the United Youth commitment. This programme is expected to run from late 2023 until 2028.



Young People participating in programmes run by United Youth

Quotes from various articles and PPEs regarding Employability/Progression

“The work is challenging but really good.”  
Participant

“It’s good to keep learning and get the opportunity to move on to College.”  
Participant

“I now have the confidence to apply for childcare in September at tech.”  
Participant

“I hadn’t a clue what I wanted to do, now I’m basically on track to become a Youth Worker. For the first time in 20 years, I’m on a track.”  
Participant

# Urban Villages Initiative - Building our safe and connected community

## Programme News

### Programme summary

The Urban Villages Initiative is designed to support communities and to work collaboratively across government departments, councils, and other interested parties to achieve positive outcomes for each Urban Village area through a series of capital investment and community-led projects.



People participating in the creation of the podcast

## St Cecilia's 'Recovery and Reignition' Project in the Derry/Londonderry Urban Village Area.

Students from St Cecilia's College in Derry/Londonderry have created a series of inspirational podcasts, addressing mental health issues and the impact of the pandemic.

Working with professional artists from Bounce Culture, 24 Year 8 students have written scripts, conducted interviews, learned technical skills and even created their own music soundtracks for the project.

Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher on the project at St Cecilia's College, said: "We asked the students to focus on lockdown and how they coped with isolation from their peers and not being able to come to school. The project has been

so successful we are already planning how we can build upon it to take it out into the community."

St Cecilia's was one of 11 post primary schools across the five Urban Village areas to receive funding through the Creative Schools Partnership. The

initiative is backed by National Lottery funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Urban Villages initiative and the Education Authority. It is designed to encourage schools to embrace the benefits of the arts by injecting more creativity into the classroom and improving educational outcomes for students, including better engagement, increased attendance, improved results, growth in confidence, self-esteem and positive mental health and well-being.

Kwame Daniels, Creative Director & lead artist at Bounce Culture, commented: "The students have been really enthusiastic and the work we've done here feeds into other aspects of their school life, like building literacy and numeracy skills, teamwork and learning to think creatively. To be able to take ownership of each stage of the creative process has been incredibly powerful for them."

The Creative School Partnership Programme promotes a student-centred approach, using the arts as a catalyst for connected learning, raising aspirations and fusing community and school-based efforts in improving educational, good relations and wider social outcomes.

Carol Morrow, Director of Urban Villages & Communities in Transition, praised the enthusiasm of everyone involved in the project, commenting "The students have produced a fantastic range of podcasts based on their reflections on their mental health during the Covid pandemic that will not only help support other young people, but also strengthen their relationship with the wider community. We look forward to seeing how St Cecilia's can build on its success next year".



Link to short video promoting the project: [Creative Schools Partnership on Vimeo](#)

## Invisible Barriers: Showcasing inspirational women throughout the generations of North Belfast

Urban Villages has supported Youth Education Health & Advice (YEHA) in North Belfast to create an exciting visual project with a group of young women, exploring the culture, heritage and dynamic role of women in the local area.

YEHA is an organisation at the heart of the North Belfast community that actively values and supports young people's health and wellbeing. YEHA Drama Project is a youth drama programme that led the project, including the development of a short film, to make a positive difference in their community. The project highlights the many achievements in the area and the power of coming together to create hope and strength.

The project culminated in a short film, shaped and designed by the participants, which showcases inspirational women throughout the generations of North Belfast and portrays and celebrates the strength and resilience of working-class women against the backdrop of adversity and difficult times.

The film was shot in Conway Mill, which began operation on the Falls Road in 1842. The young women captured the experiences of the women and children who worked in the mill during that time, with costumes supplied by the Lyric Theatre in South Belfast.

A red-carpet celebration event was held in the Strand Arts Centre in East Belfast on 15 March 2023 to launch the film and showcase the Invisible Barriers project to a wider audience.



Group of Young People on Stage



Fire Artist entertaining outside Strand Cinema

Around 100 guests attended the event and included a range of stakeholder organisations, community groups and schools.

The participants took to the stage to explain how they got involved in the project and sharing what they each gained from the experience.

Joe Hinds, the UV Local Co-ordinator for North Belfast commented "This film and project are testimony to the energy, commitment and solidarity of this impressive group of young women. The project encompasses research into shared heritage, drama, poetry and script writing as well as interviewing inspiring examples of contemporary women working across the segregated boundaries of North Belfast.... they are already breaking through barriers and providing inspiration to us all".

**The 'Invisible Barriers' project was supported through the Urban Villages Tourism & Heritage programme, delivered by Ulster University.**



Young people on stage explaining how they got into the project



You can access the Invisible Barriers film here:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e1MtoFDk0XEPII6QZuLttYDznF0MK5sy2X/view?usp=drivesdk>

## Primary school pupils from Urban Village areas launch mental health animation

Joan O'Hara, Director of Urban Villages and Infrastructure commented "Everyone involved has done a fantastic job. Our Wee Thoughts and Feelings' is a lovely animation where the pupils have shown the importance of looking after our mental health, being a good friend to others and who we can go to when we need support, something we all can get behind and learn from".

Throughout the last school year, pupils completed the 'Better Together' programme where they learned about friendship, empathy and breathing techniques for dealing with feelings and emotions. They visited each other's schools for the animation workshops working alongside professional animator Joel Simon from Hola Lola.

Jane McConville, ICT Co-ordinator at Elmgrove, said "It's the first time in a number of years the children have been able to get together with another school, so it's been really good for them, having to think creatively and being able to talk about feelings and ways of dealing with feelings."

Nicola McKeown, Acting Vice Principal of Christ the Redeemer Primary School said: "The children are now discussing their emotions and their well-being and all the strategies they have been taught through the programme. It's an absolute privilege to walk down the corridor and see our little ones using their hands to do their rollercoaster breathing or their cup-cake breathing."



Link to short video of final workshop:  
<https://youtu.be/ZZ-UbUyUu0ZA>



Link to Animation:  
<https://youtu.be/NR4sflKpd6g>



Group of people at the launch of mental health animation

The project, led by Action Mental Health, aims to build positive relations and emotional resilience in children and young people and is being delivered in education, youth and community settings across the five Urban Village Areas and the Border Region of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The animation, called 'Our wee thoughts and feelings', was created by a group of P6 pupils from Elmgrove PS in East Belfast and Christ the Redeemer PS in Collin, West Belfast.

## Discover More

If you have any questions please contact:

[info@urbanvillagesni.org](mailto:info@urbanvillagesni.org)

If you want to know more about these projects, check out the website:

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/urban-villages-initiative>

# Shared Education Campuses

## Programme summary

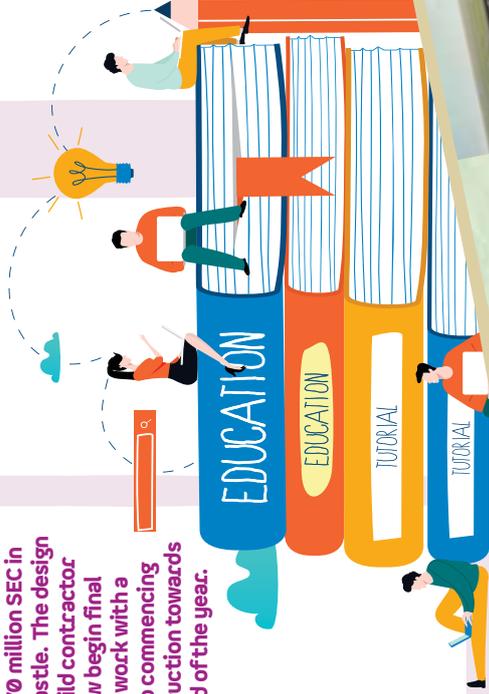
The Shared Education Campuses (SEC) Programme provides capital assistance to applicant schools to facilitate shared education. There have been three calls to the SEC Programme, with five projects having been approved to proceed to planning. The projects include a mixture of designs, but all include shared education facilities as the core element of delivery.

### Programme News

↓ Work continues on Shared Education Campuses (SEC) projects approved from the first and second calls to the programme. The two post-primary projects are leading the way with construction ongoing on the new shared facilities for the Limavady SEC and now substantially complete on the Limavady High School (HS) site, with works on the St Mary's site due to be completed in August 2023.

↓ The procurement of the Integrated Supply Team was re-launched in January 2022 for the Ballycastle SEC with the appointment finalised in May 2023. The Department of Education (DE) has appointed Heron Bros contractors to build a new £70 million SEC in Ballycastle. The design and build contractor will now begin final design work with a view to commencing construction towards the end of the year.

↓ The Brookeborough primary schools project is also progressing with the business case currently being finalised between the Education Authority (EA) and DE.



## £70million investment for Ballycastle Shared Education Campus

The Department of Education has appointed Heron Bros contractors to build a new £70 million Shared Education Campus (SEC) in Ballycastle.

The modern, state of the art education facilities will be shared between Ballycastle High School (HS) and Cross and Passion College and will be funded primarily through Fresh Start funding for Shared and Integrated Education.

Announcing the award of the contract, Permanent Secretary, Dr. Mark Browne, said:

"I am delighted to announce that the Department of Education has appointed a contractor for this unique project, which represents a significant investment of almost £70 million. The design and build contractor, Heron Bros, will now begin final design work with a view to commencing construction towards the end of the year."

"This scheme marks a new era for Ballycastle High School and Cross and Passion College. These two schools have a long and successful history of working together for the benefit of their pupils and the wider community. While both schools

will continue to retain their own individual identities within the new campus, the modern fit-for-purpose accommodation will further enhance shared delivery of the curriculum."

"The project also brings opportunities to benefit the wider Ballycastle community. I am pleased that Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is working with the Department on this exciting project and providing additional investment for top quality sports facilities which will be available for community use. The project will also include additional purpose-built Youth Club facilities."

Geraldine Duffy, Principal of Cross and Passion College, said:

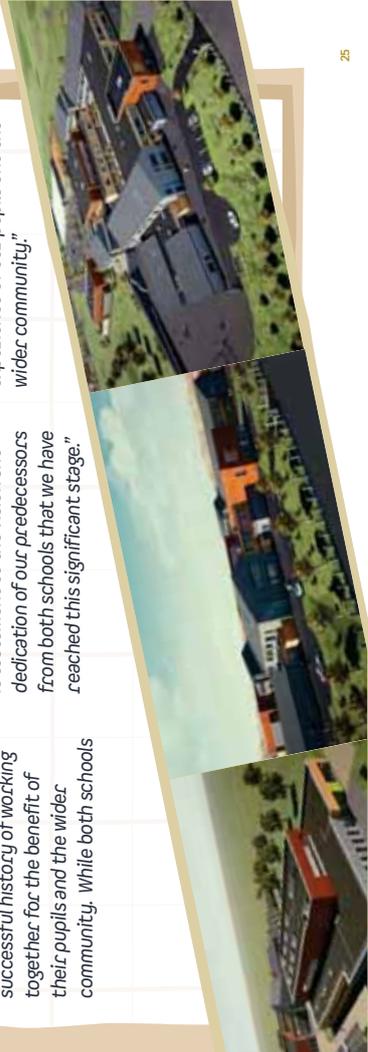
"Both schools are delighted that our shared education campus has reached this exciting milestone and we wish to thank all the key stakeholders who have worked tirelessly over the last number of years to achieve this amazing outcome. This is a wonderful opportunity for the young people and wider community in North Antrim. It is testament to the vision and dedication of our predecessors from both schools that we have reached this significant stage."

"Each year the two schools welcome visitors from across the world, keen to gain insight into how both schools provide unique experiences in their own rights, but also enhance their provision through sharing pupil learning and staff development opportunities, via their close working relationship. This investment protects the history, as well as the futures, of both schools."

Ian Williamson, Principal of Ballycastle HS, said:

"The school communities can now look forward to modern educational facilities which will benefit the pupils of both schools and the wider Ballycastle community for many years to come.

"This is a unique opportunity to realise significant benefits for young people in Ballycastle. The shared education campus safeguards the individual integrity, ethos and identity of both schools but maximises the opportunities of sharing in that context. These curricular and extra-curricular opportunities will add significant value to the experience of our pupils and the wider community."



## Hilary Clinton Visits Shared Education Campus in Limavady

Belfast, Secretary Hilary Rodham Clinton, has been able to visit the shared education campus in Limavady and meet with pupils and teachers."

"The campus is a shining example of how shared education can work in Northern Ireland and the benefits that it brings. The young people we met in Limavady are truly inspiring - they are the next generation of leaders in Northern Ireland."

During Secretary Clinton's visit she also met with a variety of school pupils and teachers to unveil two new benches to commemorate the new £11 million SEC. The visit was

new, state of the art, shared education facilities which will afford the children involved every opportunity to enable them to embrace becoming a young adult in a shared society.

**The SEC projects contribute to the desire to enhance the quality and extent of Shared Education provision within Northern Ireland, improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. As seen in all photos provided, the pupils from the schools involved have all embraced Shared Education and enjoy all events that take place.**

thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Work is progressing well on three of the four projects selected from the first and second calls to the SECP.

Construction of the Limavady SEC is expected to be completed by March 2023 and the procurement of the Integrated Supply Team has resulted in the appointment of Heron Bros to build a new £70 million SEC in Ballycastle. The Brookeborough primary schools project is also continuing to progress and is currently at Business Case stage.

All three of the continuing SEC projects are unique in their nature and will create

The Chancellor of Queens University Belfast, Hilary Rodham Clinton, visited Limavady HS and St Mary's Limavady on Wednesday 19 April 2023.

The event in Limavady was one of a series of events to mark the 25th Anniversary of the

Good Friday Agreement.

The Chancellor presided over an honorary graduation ceremony to recognise the contribution of Principals from Limavady HS, St Mary's and others who were involved in the development of the Shared Education Model. Eight dedicated educators from

Northern Ireland received honorary degrees from Queen's University Belfast during the event.

Secretary Clinton spoke about the importance of shared education and the link between Queen's University Belfast and the two schools, Limavady HS and St Mary's, Limavady. Ryan Feeney, Interim Vice-President of Strategic Engagement and External Affairs at Queen's University Belfast, commented:

"This week at Queen's we have been reflecting on 25 years of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. As part of the Agreement, shared education has been a key focus."

"Today marks a significant day for shared education in Northern Ireland and I am delighted that Chancellor of Queen's University



# Shared Housing Programme

## Programme News

### Programme summary

The aim of the Shared Housing Programme is to create communities of 'good neighbours' and ensure that there is greater choice open to those who wish to live in a mixed area.

Each Scheme is supported by an Advisory Group made up of local Community and Voluntary Groups, local political reps and Good Relations Officers from the Housing Executive and local Councils. The Groups also include representatives from Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and other relevant statutory bodies.

**69** Schemes under development badged Housing for All

**56** Schemes represented by an Advisory Group.

**33** Shared Housing schemes completed and celebrated as Shared

**15** of these are single scheme Advisory Groups and the others are merged.

**44** Good Relations Plans in Development or being delivered

**1038** households now living in a shared environment.



## Building leaders on and off the pitch

Press Release - 6 March 2023

Young people from Newry have been learning about leadership on and off the football pitch thanks to the United Through Sport Young Leaders Project. The cross-community project brought together children to learn more about leadership, good relations, personal development and to have a lot of fun with sports.

The programme, which was supported by Radius Housing and was facilitated by the Respect Project, saw 21 young

people from Newry take part in a number of sports led workshops over six months. The workshops focused on team building, tackling racism, and developing good community relations. The impact of the programme for participants was significant, helping them build new friendships, improve self-esteem, and develop new understanding about the local community.

The project included a cross community day with a visit to Belfast in partnership with Clonduff FC in East Belfast. The young people all took part in good relations themed workshops in Avonell Leisure Centre and even attended a Northern Ireland match in Windsor Park Stadium together.

All 21 participants have completed certificates in youth leadership as part of the United Through Sport Programme delivery and they organised and hosted World Cup Events with 60 primary seven children across 6 local schools as part of their accreditation.

The highlight of the programme was a three-day residential trip to Scotland, where all the young people were able to visit both Celtic & Rangers Football Clubs as well as experience stadium tours and practice on their pitches. They took part in 'Give Racism the Red Card' Workshops as part of the football ground visits.



Young People ready to get on the bus



Young People participating in the United Through Sport Young Leader Programme





Young people getting a team talk

Radius Housing is a leading social housing provider, managing more than 13,000 homes across Northern Ireland. Radius manages a number of shared housing developments, including in Newry and Belfast. The Good Relations work in these areas allowed the facilitation of cross community work for those participating in the programme.

Speaking about United Through Sport Young Leaders Project, Joe Galbraith, Radius Housing, said "it is important that young people grow up with respect and understanding for everyone in the local community, and sport is an important tool for this. It was great to see how the young people developed through this project, building new friendships, and growing in confidence. The young people today are the leaders of tomorrow, and Radius is delighted to support such a positive project"

Programme has been a great success. The young people involved have really enjoyed the sessions and they have learnt so much during their 6 months together. During the programme, the young people increased their awareness of good relations by learning about the importance of respect and learning more about others from different backgrounds and cultures through the medium of sport. It has been great for us in the Respect Project to partner with

**A total of £5.4M has been invested in the Radius Ardmore and Rockmount shared housing development and its associated Good Relations Plan. Radius continues to work in partnership with the local Advisory Group stakeholders and with residents to develop delivery of the Plan.**



Young people ready to practice their football skills

Radius Housing to deliver this programme and we look forward to working together again in the future to help benefit the young people from the Newry City area."

The United Through Sport Young Leaders Project is supported by the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's 'Housing for All' Shared Housing Programme. The Programme has its origins in the NI Executive Together: Building a United Community Strategy which reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

## 'Football for All' Tournament with the Well Lane Warriors

Newry Leisure Centre was the place to be on Sunday 19th February, as the Well Lane Warriors took on Oxford Bulls and Downs & Proud in the inaugural 'Football for All' tournament. The tournament was supported by Radius Housing and it brought together 45 young people with additional needs and learning disabilities for a day of football fun.

Well Lane Warriors was established September 2021, with the goal of providing facilities and recreation opportunities for children and young people with additional needs, learning disabilities and sensory processing concerns. The group aims to improve the lives of children and young people from the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area, through promoting physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being as well as social inclusion.

The Oxford Bulls lifted the tournament trophy, while Downs & Proud were named Team of the Tournament, and the Well Lane Warriors picked up the 'Spirit of the Tournament' award.

Jessica McMahon, founder and Chairperson of Well Lane Warriors, was delighted to bring the tournament to Newry, and is keen to promote the league to other mixed ability teams. Jessica said;

"This was a very exciting event for everyone involved in the club. We saw some really exciting and competitive games, and the standard was really high from all of the participating teams. We are grateful to Radius Housing for all their support in making this tournament possible"

Joe Galbraith, Housing Manager with Radius Housing, highlighted the importance of supporting local community groups;



Young people watching as the ball goes in the net. Goal

"We are delighted to support the Well Lane Warriors in Newry through our 'Housing for All' Good Relations Plan which aims to promote inclusion and between communities. This was an opportunity to help bring an important tournament to the area and give young people the opportunity to participate in sport, regardless of their ability."

The 'Football for All' tournament is supported by the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's 'Housing for All' Shared Housing Programme. The Programme has its origins in the NI Executive Together: Building a United Community Strategy which reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

**A total of £5.4M has been invested in the Radius Ardmore and Rockmount shared housing development and their associated Good Relations Plans.**



Young people with their trophy

## A warm Omagh welcome at the ERANO Christmas Party

Families from across the globe gathered to celebrate the festive season together at the ERANO Christmas Party in the Coffee Shop, Omagh. The party was supported by Radius Housing and Apex Housing who have Shared Housing developments in the area, and featured a visit from Santa himself, who presented gifts to all the boys and girls.

ERANO (The Empowering Refugees And Newcomers Organisation) is a support group for refugees who have settled in the Fermanagh & Omagh area, and the Christmas Party aimed to make these families, from all faiths and walks of life, feel welcome at this special time of year. Joining in the celebrations were people from Syria, Africa, Hungary, Ukraine, and Thailand, and local people. As well as getting to meet Santa, children also had the chance to try their hand at Christmas crafts, while parents were able to sample global traditional treats such as festive hot chocolate, mulled wine, Lebkuchen, Stollen Cake, Beigli, Mince Pies, and savory snacks.

Radius and Apex Housing continue to work in partnership with local Advisory Group stakeholders and residents, as part of their Good Relations work. Among the Shared Housing developments managed by Radius Housing in Omagh are Woodbrook and Camowen Woods. This event was part of the Good Relations Plan for the area, that includes 'Bridging' events which are delivered to the wider community to encourage a range of good relations outcomes such as Health and Wellbeing, Education and Training

The project was also supported by the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's 'Housing for All' Shared Housing Programme. The Programme has its origins in the NI Executive Together: Building a United Community Strategy which reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. Over 2 million pounds has been invested in the 2 Radius Omagh shared housing developments and associated five-year Good Relations Plans.



Young refugees participating in Christmas crafting



Young refugees showing off their crafting

Speaking at the event, Blanaid Bruce from Radius Housing said "The community across Omagh and Fermanagh has welcomed refugees from all across the globe and are helping them to make a new home here. Christmas is a special time of year, and what ERANO want to demonstrate is that no matter what your beliefs or background, the message of the season is one of warmth and welcome."

The party was enjoyed by all in attendance, and some comments included "your support for Syrian families is so much appreciated," while another said "This is how we make a better society - by all being human and appreciating each other's uniqueness."

**Radius and Apex have shared housing developments across Northern Ireland.**



## Super Summer Scheme supported by Clannmil Housing



Young People canoeing down a river.

Young people from the Felden and Longlands areas of Newtownabbey will be going back to school with a real sense of accomplishment after taking part in an action-packed summer scheme with canoeing, archery and more!

The cross-community six-week summer scheme was supported by Clannmil Housing and delivered by coaches from Community Sports Network and Belfast Activity Centre. The programme was designed to give the young people a chance to try out new activities together, like canoeing, mountain biking, high wire, caving, and archery.

Billy Boyd from Community Sports Network said:

*"This type of outdoor programme is a great way to get young people out of their homes and engaging in the great outdoors. As well as having lots of fun the young people also were encouraged to take part in healthy pursuits. It was great to work with Clannmil Housing who supported us in delivering this programme."*

Gerard Rosato, Community Cohesion Officer at Clannmil added:

*"This summer scheme has been a very positive experience for the young people. They ranged in age from 9 to 15 and it was great to see them getting to know each other whilst learning new skills such as rowing and archery and experiencing the benefits of effective team working."*

Clannmil aim to develop strong, vibrant communities where people of all ages and from all backgrounds get together and learn from each other. The programme was one of many initiatives delivered bringing real benefits to those living in Felden and surrounding areas. The summer scheme was a 'bridging' programme that was developed from the Felden Good Relations Plan. Bridging events and programmes are delivered to the wider community to encourage a range of good relations outcomes which relate to health and wellbeing, education and training.

Felken in Newtownabbey is one of Clannmil's shared housing developments and was established in 2016 as part of the NI Executive Together: Building A United Community Strategy. In total, Clannmil currently has six shared housing developments across Northern Ireland and is promoting a further three.

Clannmil continues to work in partnership with the Felken local Advisory Group stakeholders and residents to develop the Good Relations Plan, which seeks to build good relationships and a sustainable community.

The summer scheme was supported through the NI Executive Together: Building A United Community Strategy, which reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. The Felken shared housing development is also supported by the Department for Communities and the NI Housing Executive. £6.03m funding was invested in the scheme's development and the roll out of the associated five-year Good Relations Plan.



Young People learning how to use oars.



# Peace IV and Peace Plus

## Programme News

### Peace IV Skate 100 Park and Shared Space Opened in Antrim and Newtownabbey

Through the European Union's Peace IV Programme along with TEO's match funding an exciting new skate park "Skate 100" has been launched by Anticim and Newtownabbey Borough Council during 2022 at the V36 Park in Newtownabbey. The £750,000 skatepark was delivered under the Peace IV Programme's Shared Spaces and Services theme.

One of the largest skateparks in One of the largest skateparks in the UK and Ireland the 14,000 square-foot Skate Park hosts an exhilarating range of urban sports that are not for the faint-hearted!

From skateboarding and BMX to parkour, with features ledges, stairs, banks sharp hips, waterfalls, volcanoes and a 10-foot-deep bowl it's perfect for those at beginner level right through to the expert

skaters! The growing demand for urban sports and increased awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing were key factors behind the project.

Skate 100 aims to encourage young people to engage in an active, healthy lifestyle, and draw in thousands of people by providing a safe, shared space for people from all backgrounds to get together. Skate 100 is also set to welcome more visitors to the council area while attracting



Skateboarder using the skatepark



Scooter user, practising tricks at the skatepark

Further investment to aid economic growth in the area. Skate 100 will generate many benefits, therefore, to the local and wider community for many years to come. So far, it's received rave reviews. The links below provide some more information about the skatepark and give you the opportunity to see it in action. And why not call by to see the experts in action or have a go yourself!



Video Link: [Pre-Launch Video](#)



Video Link: [Launch Video](#)

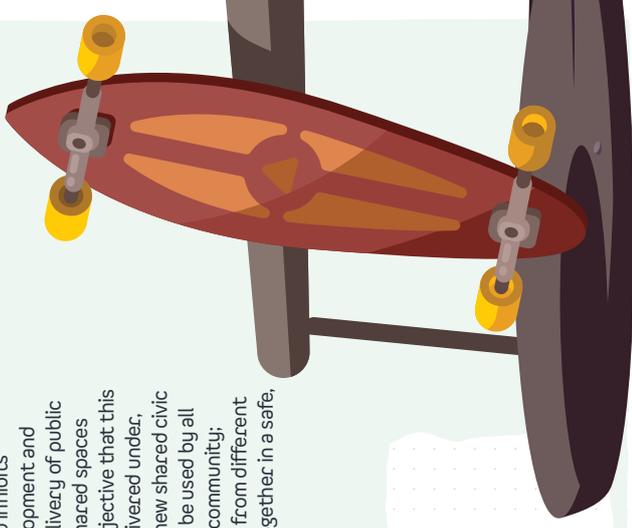
## Discover More

For more information about the Peace IV and Peace Plus Programme please contact:

[grbusinesssupport@executiveoffice-nigov.uk](mailto:grbusinesssupport@executiveoffice-nigov.uk)

The PEACEPLUS Programme, which is expected to launch in Spring 2023, will continue the legacy of Peace IV and previous Peace Programmes in funding important good relations work like Skate 100.

The PEACE Programme is a unique cross-border initiative, promoting social and economic stability in the region by actions to promote cohesion between communities. Segregation increases social division and tension and also inhibits economic development and the efficient delivery of public services- the shared spaces and services objective that this project was delivered under, aims to create new shared civic spaces that will be used by all sections of the community; bringing people from different backgrounds together in a safe, inclusive space.



# Central Good Relations Fund

## Programme summary

The Central Good Relations Fund (CGRF) supports constituted voluntary and community sector groups to deliver good relations projects where there is evidence of good relations need. Since 2016, £15million has been awarded to support over 460 projects. In the last three funding years alone over 100,000 direct participants have been positively impacted by programmes using activities like sport, music and crafts to engage local communities.

### Programme News

In 2022/23, the Central Good Relations Fund awarded

**£3m** to 96 projects including small grants, aiming to positively impact on approximately **38,000** people across Northern Ireland.

These projects used a wide range of activities such as

**music and the arts sport & other outdoor pursuits**

health and wellbeing, personal development and educational attainment, to promote Good Relations and build positive relationships within and between local communities.

There was unprecedented demand for CGRF Small Grants, with the

**22/23** scheme receiving

**41**

applications throughout the funding period, of which

**25**

were successfully funded.

The **2023/24** CGRF closed for project funding applications in January, receiving

**201**

applications requesting a total of

**£7.36m** funding.

The assessment process for project funding for the

**2023/24**

CGRF is complete, and groups will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible and once budgets have been confirmed.

## Ulidia Training – Firm Foundations

The project delivered community focussed workshops incorporating themes such as culture, active citizenship and leadership, and also included accredited training to 194 of the participants ranging from event safety, stewarding and risk assessment, to safeguarding and child protection.

Ulidia Training is a voluntary community organisation based in Ballymoney which provides training, education and essential skills to marginalised PUL communities, to equip them to play a constructive, pro-active, and inclusive role in the cultural, political, and social-economic life of Northern Ireland.

Funded by the Executive Office's 2022/23 Central

Good Relations Fund (CGRF), Ulidia Training engaged a

total of 384 participants through their 22/23 "Firm Foundations" project,

improving employment and social inclusion opportunities, and building confidence, whilst also reinforcing peaceful and lasting resolutions within local communities of the Causeway Coast and Glens and Mid & East Antrim Council areas.

The Cultural Training part of the programme was designed to allow participants to partake in the musical aspect of their culture and the strong connections to other cultures. It aimed to show participants that cultural music can be welcoming, non-confrontational and can promote positive community relationships.

Participants also organised a cultural night in Bushmills to welcome Ukrainian families to the area, organising music, talks and food from the local area, a positive change in a single identity area, and a real community effort to ensure those from a different background with a different language were warmly welcomed.



Adults enjoying some musical instruments

The following are just a few of the many positive comments that were received from participants:

→ **It has made me more aware of the impact I can have on others and how I should be aware of that.**

→ **There are so many differences between my community and the other community, but we have so many similarities. If we can get past viewing each other's cultures as offensive, there may be hope.**

→ **I will now use my identity for the right reasons, be proud of it but not use it to offend or upset. Likewise, I want others to do the same towards me and I will try to respect their differences.**

→ **I have felt that I have made a difference to other's lives as well and this makes me proud!**



Group of people at Cultural Training event

# District Council Good Relations Programme

## Programme summary

The key aims of the District Council Good Relations Programme (DCGRP) are to improve relations between and within Council areas and to support local solutions to local good relations issues.

## Programme News

### Tibuc Trees Initiative – Growing our Future Together in Mid Ulster

The Tibuc Trees Initiative, funded by the Executive Office, seeks to provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds with opportunities to learn more about the environment. It supports a range of projects across our good relations funding schemes.

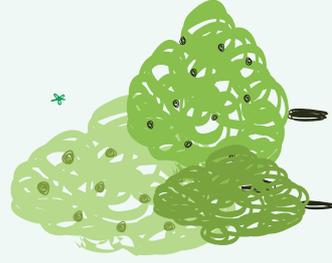
On the 17 November 2021 I was delighted to attend a tree planting event in Coalisland town centre where I was met by Sean Henry, a Good Relations Officer from Mid Ulster District Council. Also attending were 120 pupils and staff from four primary schools in the area, Newmills, Bush, P.imate Dixon and Geelscoil Uí Neill schools, along with Cllr. Sean McGuigan, chairperson of the Council's Environment committee.

The message conveyed to the pupils was how trees can help combat climate change, clean the air, reduce our carbon footprint, help prevent water pollution, and provide a habitat for wildlife. Pupils also learned that Northern Ireland has comparatively little woodland, relative to other European countries. While in recent decades many hedges, and hedgerow trees have been removed to make fields bigger, to accommodate modern agricultural machinery.

**It was wonderful to see so many young people from all backgrounds enjoying and engaging at the event and to experience the positive impact of TEO funding through the District Council Good Relations Programme.**

*Neil Lynas*

District Council Good Relations Programme Support Officer



## Tibuc Trees Initiative: Wild Walks in Carrickfergus



Groups of people attending tree planting events

The Tibuc Trees Programme, funded by the Executive Office, seeks to provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds to come together to learn more about the environment and participate in shared good relations activities. It supports a range of projects across existing good relations funding schemes.

The latest Tibuc Trees event took place on March 4th at Bashford Island Wood in Carrickfergus and I was delighted to be invited along to take part.

The event - the culmination of the "Forest Families" programme - was organised by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council as part of their District Council Good Relations Programme Action Plan, which is supported by TEO and aims to provide local solutions to local good relations issues.

15 families attended. After a few words from Mayor Noel Williams, they took part in tree planting and a short bushcraft session led by ethnobotanist Paul Moore from Wildwalk Bushcraft. Paul was very passionate and knowledgeable about the environment and spoke about the importance not only of "global" issues, but about the need for greater environmental awareness & engagement in a local sense.

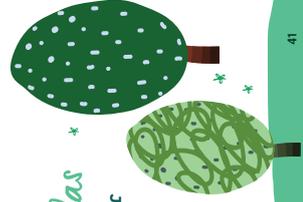
By linking the activity with the Tibuc Trees Programme, TEO were able to provide learning, branded materials, and links to other groups working on similar projects by placing the event in the context of wider environmental initiatives taking place under the Tibuc Trees Programme.

Speaking to local families, I was struck by the overwhelmingly positive response to the event, the children's enthusiasm, and the positive effect shared interests and activities can have in creating pathways to improving good relations and developing lasting friendships.

As well as planting trees, the families and I learned how to build a shelter and set a fire in the wild - eat your heart out Bear Grylls. We also took part in a foraging walk and learned about the trees and plants growing in the local area. The morning was a great success and a wonderful example of how existing programmes could benefit from linking with the Tibuc Trees Programme.

**If you would like to find out more about the Tibuc Trees Programme, please contact Paul Douglas in DCI Branch for more information.**

*Paul Douglas*  
Programme Manager  
Tibuc Trees



*Discover More*  
If you have any questions please contact:  
[District.Council.GoodRelations@office-ni.gov.uk](mailto:District.Council.GoodRelations@office-ni.gov.uk)

## T:buc - in pictures

*Photos from: Good Relations Awards & Engagement Forum Event (March 2023)*



# #GRW23

# TOGETHER GOOD RELATIONS WEEK 2023

## 18th - 24th September

Register an event at  
[goodrelationsweek.com](http://goodrelationsweek.com)

Good Relations:  
A Forward Look  
June 2023

*Discover More*

Further information on the T:buc Strategy may be found at

[www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/tbuc](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/tbuc)



Northern Ireland  
Executive

**T:buc**  
Changing for the better, together.



COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS  
COUNCIL  
NI's Voice | Partnership





# Good Relations: A Forward Look

June 2023



*Discover More*

Further information on the T:buc  
Strategy may be found at:

[www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/tbuc](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/tbuc)

