

**British~Irish**

# Strategic Youth Partnership 2014 - 2018

# Review

**inspiring young people**

**promoting youth work**

**connecting young people**

**challenging inequalities**

UK Youth, Youth Scotland, Youth Cymru, YouthAction Northern Ireland and Youth Work Ireland are five campaigning youth work charities committed to social action, striving to make England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the best places for young people to flourish.

These five charities have worked closely together for over 100 years. This report highlights the results of joint initiatives over the past five years, as we face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.



# Who we are

**UK Youth, Youth Scotland, Youth Cymru, YouthAction Northern Ireland and Youth Work Ireland** are five leading youth work charities, working locally, regionally and nationally to improve the life chances of young people throughout the UK and Ireland. Tackling poverty and disadvantage in our day to day work with young people, we have relationships spanning 100 years.

Together we are striving to increase the understanding of the impact of youth work and to strengthen advocacy actions of the five partners.

Historically, relationships across the four UK charities have been through traditional membership arrangements of the National Association of Youth Clubs, with Youth Scotland, Youth Cymru and YouthAction Northern Ireland being members of UK Youth (established in 1911).

The relationship between Youth Work Ireland and YouthAction Northern Ireland, not being bound by traditional membership protocols, could be more dynamic and in tune with shifting political developments. Over forty years these two charities strived to enhance opportunities for young people and youth leaders to work more collaboratively across the island of Ireland.

The five charities have been working together from their inception.

**Youth Work Ireland** works to develop the potential of young people and strengthen communities in Ireland through the provision of quality youth services. It is the largest youth organisation in Ireland, made up of **21 local member youth services** and a national office. Members are supported to deliver an integrated services model to young people in their communities. This means that young people around Ireland can avail of a whole range of services and support if and when needed.

Engaging with over **116,000 young people every week**, which is 20% of all young people in Ireland.

**UK Youth** is a leading national charity, committed to providing access to high quality services in every community so that young people are empowered to build bright futures, regardless of their background or circumstances.

**1.5 million young people** are supported by UK Youth members and **5.5 million pounds** is put back into youth services by UK Youth.

**Youth Scotland** is the largest national youth work organisation in Scotland, supporting **66,000 young people, 1,400 youth groups** and over **8,000 youth workers**.

This diverse membership has national reach and is made up of a network of local Area Associations, youth groups, youth workers and volunteers. Youth Scotland values the development of community based youth work as an essential approach and creates ways for youth work to enable more young people to demonstrate what they have achieved personally and within their communities

**Youth Cymru** is a national youth work charity with an 81 year history. Their mission is to support young people (11-25) to reach their full potential and have a voice in all decisions affecting them; to promote positive images of young people by showcasing their achievements; and ensuring the vital role of youth work within Wales is recognised by decision makers and wider society

**YouthAction Northern Ireland** is a membership based, youth work and arts charity, with a 75 year history of working with young people to tackle inequalities; improve their life chances; and contribute to flourishing communities in a peaceful, shared society.

The charity works with **15,000 young people** each year to increase their well-being, aspirations and opportunities and supports **153 local member groups** to improve their services to young people.

We build strategic partnerships with charities, the business sector, academia, government and civic society, to secure resources, meet the needs of young people and raise quality standards in youth work.

## British ~ Irish Strategic Partnership 2014 - 2018

This agreement for 2014 – 2018 is in tune with contemporary British and Irish political alliances, respecting the five jurisdictions and relevant to national and local interests. It was the result of a British ~ Irish Symposium held in 2013 between young people, volunteers, staff and Board members of the five charities.

Whilst recognising that youth work and education policies are devolved matters in the UK and Ireland has a national youth policy framework, the partnership looks for shared learning opportunities.

Relationships and reconciliation are at the heart of this agreement.

We sought to increase our collective ability to tackle some of the most challenging issues facing young people; as well as energising young people to be more mobile and to work collaboratively on areas of interest. Our ambition was to support and inspire everyone in our network.

This agreement was set out prior to the EU Referendum in 2016 and implemented during a period of great uncertainty. It became increasingly apparent that positive civic leadership, and increased investment in British ~ Irish relationships would be critical in this new era.

We are pleased to report that **57,747 young people** participated in joint activities across the five countries between 2014 and 2018.

**We now find ourselves stronger moving into our 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan as closest friends and neighbours.**



## What did we plan to do together?

The five priorities for our network from 2014 – 2018 were:

1. Promote the value of youth work collectively.
2. Build contemporary alliances between young people and those who work with young people.
3. Connect young people through civic engagement.
4. Increase advocacy and campaigning work with and on behalf of young people.
5. Improve well-being, resilience and employability in young people.

**These priorities complement, but are additional to the operational activities of each charity.**



# How well did we do?

## Priority 1 ~ Promote the value of youth work collectively

**8316** young people across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland gained a new qualification and increased their communication, decision making and team work skills by completing nationally recognised

**Youth Achievement Awards.**

**364** young people and staff from **7** countries participated in **Erasmus+ KA2**

**Youth work music and cultural entrepreneurship exchanges**

This resulted in increased shared learning, increased mobility and new resources for youth work (**toolkit & website**) in Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Lithuania & Iceland.

**4** partner organisations and **20** staff and volunteers in Ireland and Northern Ireland, participated in **Erasmus+ KA2**

**Supporting travellers through universal services.**

Resulting in new resources for youth work, the **STATUS Toolkit**, to support the inclusion of young travellers in youth work settings.

**30** shared learning events between staff resulting in, increased understanding of B~l political structures and policies; increased relationship building and reconciliation; and increased collaboration and improved working relationships across England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

## Priority 2 ~ Build contemporary alliances between young people and those who work with young people.

**105** young people, volunteers, Trustees and staff from the 5 charities organised **3 British ~ Irish Symposiums**, in London, Dublin and Kerry.

Resulting in increased understanding of values and purpose of each partner, increased opportunities for working together, increased relationship building, shared understanding of Brexit, and increased pride in the five nation partnership

**25,000** young people in Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland participated in the **IYMA** (Irish Youth Music Awards) and **The Big Music Project (UK)**.

Resulting in increased working together, performing together and cross border movement of young people.

**13,214** young people across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have increased confidence in dealing with money through **Money4Life**.

**14,312** young people increased their digital skills through **Generation Code**

**3334** young people in Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England with increased activities through **UPS**.

**34** youth leaders and **24** young people participated in **I Lead** training between Scotland and Ireland.

YWI hosted cross border **Consensus Conference** in October 2017 including LIFEMAPS journey to good mental health.

**14** countries worked together on a **Horizon 2020** application led by partnership.

## Priority 3 ~ Connect young people through civic engagement

**100** young people and 5 staff from the 5 charities participated in **3 Erasmus+ Key Action 3 Structured dialogue with the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly**; with increased knowledge of B-I political structures; increased research and presentation skills, increased relationship and reconciliation.

**48** young people from across the UK Youth Network represented each country to contribute to and co-design priorities of UK Youth and UK Youth Voice.

**180** young people from across England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland converged in Dundalk for a **Youth Network for Peace** conference to build relationships and reconciliation in November 2018.

## Priority 4 ~ Increase advocacy and campaigning work with young people and on behalf of young people.

Joint manifestoes were produced by young people for 2016 elections, calling for an end to poverty, improved equality and votes for 16.

**220** young business, political, academic and political leaders hosted a 2 day, **Islands of Innovation** symposium in Belfast in 3 venues with 25 high profile speakers in September 2017.

Resulting in increased appreciation of building positive relationships across the isles and influencing actions.

**Youth Network for Peace** is a new cross border, youth led initiative in 2018, building a vibrant movement of **10,000** young people aged 15 – 25 years across Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland.

**13** partner organisations support a range of youth lead activities such as Youth bank, social action, let's talk political dialogue events and a radio and social media station.

Tune in @radioynp.com

## Priority 5 ~ improve the well-being, resilience and employability of young people

**224** young people outside education, training and employment, who face severe barriers to learning, life and work, participated in **AMPLIFY** six month intensive citizenship, good relations and personal development programmes in Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland in 2018.

We support the **Coca-Cola Thankyou Fund** to distribute 100,000 euro each year to youth projects on island of Ireland and the Irish **Youth Foundation (UK)** to invest £100,000 each year in schools and youth projects across NI.



# What did young people and youth workers say?

*"To follow on from our meeting with the parliamentarians in Cardiff I made contact with the Oireachtas Health Committee in the Irish Government to inform them of the project and request a meeting. One senator in this committee offered me the opportunity to do a presentation on our calls open to all members of the Houses, this event was a brilliant way to meet more politicians outside of BIPA who share a common interest"*

*"Great spirit, great collaboration, great way forward planned out. Really excited about the next steps together."*

*"Personally I found BIPA an amazing opportunity for a young person aspiring to be a politician to really see how important it is to engage with members of the public. This was an amazing learning experience that provided me with a vast insight into the issues affecting young people across many nations outside of my own."*

*"Felt a real spirit of respect, of passion for what we could do and what we do, to make a difference for young people together."*

*"It has been a valuable experience to learn more from the five countries and to discover where and how we can work together to strengthen our work and how we support young people."*

*"For me the opportunity to make new friends has been tremendous, I've been lucky enough for many of these friendships to continue after the project ended and this has really helped me through a tough time and I'm forever grateful for that."*

*"We must strive to increase our collective ability to shape policy and legislative changes, as well as energising young people to be more mobile and to work collaboratively on areas of interest."*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT5xWeeM4QQ>



# Ambitions moving forward

Through our network, we will continue to contribute to peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland; strengthen co-operation and good relationships on the island of Ireland and further encourage positive relations and collaboration between Britain and Ireland.

- We will continue to connect young people through civic engagement, building a vibrant movement of young people who are inclusive of others, outward and forward looking.
- Whilst recognising that young people are reported to be disinterested in party politics, we know that many young people care deeply about issues, and are actively involved in social campaigns and principled protest.
- We will promote the value and impact of youth work, by building alliances between young people and those who work with them. We will specifically reach out to those young people facing inequalities and living in challenging circumstances.
- We have evidence that youth work is highly effective in building skills for learning, life and work and can contribute to a brighter future for young people living in the UK and Ireland.
- Finally, we will inspire leadership, learning and growth in young people, staff and volunteers, to maximise our contribution to youth work and civic society.

**These priorities will shape our Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025.**



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