

Lighting
the way to
★ a brighter
Future

2023-2027 Strategic Plan

*Young People Leading Change
for a Fairer and Inclusive World*



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a membership-based learning organisation that is outward and forward looking to best meet the changing needs of young people through youth work and youth arts.

Charity number: NIC106365 Company number: NI035317



Foreword

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, members and young people, I am delighted to present our strategic plan for the next five years based on consultation with young people, members, volunteers and staff and referencing to research and Government priorities. This deliberate and informed strategy is flexible for emerging needs in an ever-changing landscape.

The lives of young people are shaped by enabling and disabling factors that affect their growth and development. We pay careful attention to constraints and limitations such as inter-generational poverty and disadvantage; the human cost of poverty and inequalities; personal and social anxieties; a common disregard to the rights of children and young people; and the personal impact of inter-personal and structural prejudice, hatred, discrimination and violence.

YouthAction NI maintain an asset-based outlook in which we build upon the opportunities such as digital technologies and ICT; young people's activism and passion to create change in non-traditional manners; altruistic and compassionate behaviours demonstrated by young people; and young people's passion and commitment to climate justice and sustainable development.

Youth work has an important role to play in supporting young people to understand and use their rights and enable key providers of services for children and young people to do the same. Our role is to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people in Northern Ireland. Based on our organisations foundations, YouthAction strives to influence government policy and emerging strategies.

Youth work is in essence human rights work and brings about huge benefits to children and young people and in contributing to a better and fairer society. YouthAction NI works with young people and alongside

our members, other voluntary youth work charities and a range of business, statutory and academic partners to tackle inequalities in the lives of young people. We demonstrate social leadership through passionate advocacy and courageous change making.

Our activities and approaches further prioritise the welfare and safety of children and young people through Safeguarding Designated Officers, Trainers, Skilled Workers/Volunteers and through diligent policies and procedures.

We take great pride in the youth work/ youth arts professions in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland and strive to nurture sectoral relations through which we can build collective collaborative advantage. We recognise the interdependence between charities and the need to support one another to transform lives and communities. We invest in North-South and East-West relations through our cross national Youth Work Strategic Partnership to improve the lives of young people across the British and Irish isles.

In 2024, our charity will celebrate 80 years of developing innovative interventions that have addressed issues critical to young people across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

I look forward to reporting each year on our progress and celebrating success.

Professor Ann Marie Gray
Chairperson
YouthAction Northern Ireland
January 2023

Our Vision

Young people leading change for a fairer and inclusive world.

Our Mission

YouthAction Northern Ireland challenges inequalities to improve life chances for young people and their communities.

Through such intention and purpose we:

- 1) improve their life chances
- 2) inspire them as activists
- 3) grow inclusive and outward looking communities
- 4) build a peaceful and shared society.



Outcomes for young people

Through youth work and youth art methodologies, young people will:

1. Build and improve their health and well-being.
2. Increase their creative expression.
3. Improve their life and work skills.
4. Demonstrate leadership, activism and peace building.



Health and well-being.

We challenge stereotypes and norms in relation to all aspects of health (mental and emotional; physical; sexual; spiritual; social and intellectual)

We invest in healthy relationships through education.

We support young people to embrace the positive aspects of their gender identities and to embrace alternatives that do not damage their development.

Creative expression.

We value the unique potential and expression of each young person in all aspects of their lives.

We maximise creative imagination for self and collective discovery that inspires public awareness and social action.

Life and work skills.

We challenge life set-backs and build tenacity, dedication, optimism and an overall opportunity for learning for life and work.

We challenge discrimination of young women and young men in economic settings.

We challenge restricted gender expectations and promote alternatives to this.

Leadership, activism and peace building.

We support the visibility and active participation of those under represented in community and public life including young women, young people with disabilities, young people from minority communities and young LGBTQ. We address prejudices and stereotypes that impact negatively on young people.

We actively support young people with political and media literacy and utilise peer led methodologies to influence change such as environmental and sustainable development.

A little bit of light dispels a lot of darkness





Our Values and Principles

Our values and principles are set in the context of the United Nations Human Rights standards. Youth work has an important role to play in supporting young people to understand and use their rights and enable key providers of services for children and young people to do the same.

Our values and principles reflect interventions directly with young people and that also inspire collective collaboration to influence and achieve the best outcomes for young people and the wider society.

1. We role model the inclusive values of youth work by acting with integrity and an ethical and moral compass, where prejudice, discrimination and organised hatred are condemned.
2. We recognise injustices and inequalities and challenge these through our practices and in places of influence.
3. We build and inspire leadership qualities and skills in young people and adults through quality learning and training.
4. We recognise the significant impact of youth volunteering nurturing young people as assets and active citizens within all aspects of life in affecting sustainable change.
5. We believe in choice and provide a variety of quality curriculum, support and training for young people.
6. We are proud of young people and work with them to share their stories and lived experiences.
7. We invest in multiple partnerships including with young people, our membership and strategic collaborations.
8. We commit to collective orientation and seek to grow sectoral leadership and cooperative relations.
9. We are self-reflective and strive for continuous improvement and quality standards.

**Be the light that
helps others see**

Love is a light that shines from heart to heart

John Denver



Organisational / Strategic goals for 2023-2027

1. Strive for a sustainable and robust financial base for our work, raising **2 million pounds** each year to achieve high quality youth work and value for money outcomes.
2. Invest in **250 communities each year** to embed quality youth work to support young people's development.
3. Improve the health, well-being, aspirations and opportunities of **10,000 young people** aged 10-25 years each year.
4. Increase the skills, qualifications and employability of **1,000 young leaders** each year.
5. Demonstrate the highest levels of governance and operational excellence within a clear constitutional and legal framework.
6. Inspire, build and nurture an effective, supportive and healthy leadership team at YouthAction NI and through our membership network.
7. Build local and strategic partnerships with charities, business sector, academia, government and civic society across the UK, Ireland and Internationally.
8. Work with sectoral representatives as courageous change makers to transform how charities are recognised, valued and supported.
9. Raise quality standards in youth work through partnerships, research, training, resource development and impact demonstration.

Nothing can dim the light that shines from within.

Maya Angelou



Follow us:



YouthAction NI



@YouthActionNI

YouthAction
NORTHERN IRELAND

ARMAGH

St. Patrick's Trian
38A Upper English Street
ARMAGH
BT61 7BA

Contact: 028 3751 1624

NEWRY

81A Hill Street
NEWRY, Co. Down
BT34 8DG

Contact: 028 3025 6040

BELFAST

14 College Square North
BELFAST
BT1 6AS

Contact: 028 9024 0551

NORTH WEST

Office 3
1st Floor Waterside Library
23 Glendermott Road
Waterside, Derry/Londonderry
BT47 6BG

Contact: 028 7131 8854

ENNISKILLEN

Fermanagh House
Broadmeadow Place
Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh
BT74 7HR

Contact: 028 6632 8534

KILKEEL

37 Greencastle Street
Kilkeel
Co Down
BT34 4BH

Contact: 028 4176 9863

www.youthaction.org

tune in: www.radioynp.com