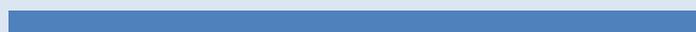




Community Relations Equality and Diversity NI

Respecting Difference



Background Information:

This project focused on supporting newcomer young people from black, minority and ethnic (BME) origin in the Armagh area, with the majority of the young people originally from Lithuania.

There was an identified need to support these young people, who were not engaging in any youth service provision.

The project explored the promotion of tolerance, challenged prejudice and discrimination within and between communities and encouraged acceptance and respect between young people from different communities.

- **CRED Focus:** Main focus was on Race, other issues within: Religious Belief, Political Opinion and Sexual Orientation were explored and challenged.
- **Number of Participants:** 18: There were 9 female and 9 male participants. A majority of the participants were catholic.
- **Ages of Participants:** Between 11-18 years, majority between 11-15 years.
- **Duration:** An activity based **three day residential** followed by a **12 week programme, one evening per week.** Start Date: July 2013- Finish date- Dec 2013.
- **Funding Provided by CRED Enhancement Scheme:** £2680.09.

Project Aims:

To:



create a safe and secure environment that will enable young people to explore their values and beliefs, challenge stereotypes and participate in a positive learning environment;



increase cohesion between young people from newcomer communities, in particular from Lithuania and other communities in Armagh;



give young people the opportunity to explore and challenge prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping in relation to Racism, Sectarianism and Homophobia;



challenge negative attitudes towards those from different communities, promoting the broader vision and practice for embedding community relations, equality and diversity among other young people; and



help young people gain and use opportunities to overcome barriers and enable them to fulfil their own learning potential.

Baseline Position:

This project was identified through observations by the Youth Worker in Armagh who identified that a group of newcomer young people from the Armagh area were not engaging in any type of youth service provision. He consequently contacted the Inclusion Youth Worker from the Dungannon/Armagh area to discuss the way forward. Key issues were identified through the area plan assessment of need and through consultation with young people who saw racism and discrimination issues as being one of the leading factors to them not fulfilling their potential.

A targeted plan of support which was set within the priorities for youth context for this particular group was agreed. Similar issues were identified by the Area Youth Worker in the Dungannon area. As a result of discussions and clear evidence of need, two CRED applications were submitted from the Armagh and Dungannon Youth Service. Both projects focussed on supporting young people from newcomer backgrounds, celebrating diversity and challenging inter-racism within their communities as well as from outside their communities.

Project Context: Priorities for Youth

The strategic aims of youth work in support of the DE vision are:

- To contribute to raising standards for all and closing the performance gap between the highest and lowest achieving young people by providing access to enjoyable, non-formal learning opportunities that help them to develop enhanced social and cognitive skills and overcome barriers to learning; and
- To continue to improve the non-formal learning environment by creating inclusive, participative settings in which the voice and influence of young people are championed, supported and evident in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes.

Achieving the overall aims requires:

Alignment of youth work policy with the strategic priorities for education, which will help shape and modernise provision in order to produce more equitable outcomes for young people;

The proportionate targeting of services based on need with a clear focus on those most in need of additional support to achieve their potential, embrace diversity, and overcome disaffection; and

A clear focus on the provision of measurable, quality learning experiences for young people, which we felt we clearly provided through this project.

The Contribution of Youth Work to the DE Priorities

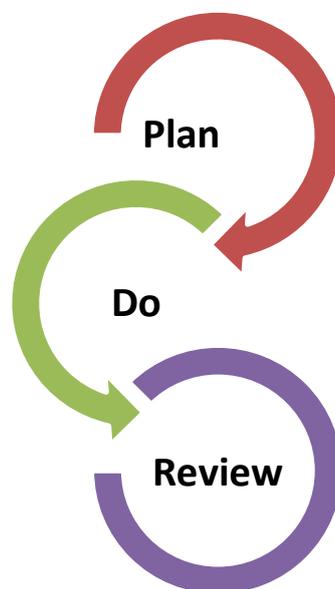
Equality, inclusion and rights are the cornerstones of an education system which enables every learner to fulfil their potential. Setting a clearer policy for youth work aligned to the DE priorities provides a clear sense of purpose and focus on the added value youth work brings to the holistic education of young people. It enables workers, volunteers and managers to connect not only what they are contributing, but also why their programmes and activities are important, including:

Helping young people to develop an understanding of, and respect for, the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination. The Department's CRED policy is a key driver in this regard and was the at the core of our work within this project.

The strategic aims have given us the opportunity to target and reach out to as many young people who are considered at the margins of the community and encourage their participation in a wide range of developmental programmes.

This policy enabled us to create non-formal opportunities where young people can develop their understanding of themselves, foster tolerance of and partnerships with others and encourage acceptance and celebration of diversity and as stated in the document, the CRED policy has helped the youth service to achieve this through the funded programme.

The Process:





The Consultation Process

A specific group of newcomer young people from the Armagh area took part in a consultation process which examined issues facing young people who come from BME/Newcomer communities. Issues such as fear of being attacked both verbally and physically as well as fear of discrimination, stereotyping, feelings of isolation and loneliness, challenges with self-image and labelling were only some of those issues that were identified during this consultation.

The young people highlighted that racism was very prevalent in their area and they stated that the racism occurs inter-racial as well between different groupings of newcomers.

There was a targeted recruitment for this programme with specific emphasis on recruiting young people from newcomer communities in the Armagh Area. Young people from the Armagh area were consulted with and put forward the desire to develop a project in the locality which would engage other newcomers to the service and give them the opportunity to interact and integrate with host young people in a setting other than school.

“Best bit of the programme was going away and meeting new people from different communities, countries, races and cultures.”

Quote from one of the young people



Do

The young people were encouraged and supported to engage with one another during a 3 day residential at St Columb's Park House in Derry and through a 12 week programme that developed respect for each other, as well as promoting equality and challenged discrimination.

Main Activities:

- Recruit new young people on to the programme;
- **Activity based 3 day residential** to introduce the young people and to develop relationships (Residential Programme Outline in Appendix 1). The residential will act as the initial engagement tool to recruit the young people and will enable them to form and build relationships. There were two groups at the residential- the group from the Dungannon area and the group from the Armagh area. During the residential the young people participated in teambuilding activities, developed relationships, explored what CRED meant to them, community mapping activities. They were a number of unplanned activities that arose out of the discussions during the three days. The young people identified the key issues that need to be developed in the subsequent 12 week programme.



The group of young people who participated in the 3 day residential

- **The 12 week programme-** (12 week programme is outlined in Appendix 2) the group of young people participated in a 12 week programme, one night a week in their youth setting in Armagh. During the 12 weeks, they participated in a range of active learning sessions including workshops on exploring racism, sectarianism, homophobia, promoting tolerance, challenging prejudice and discrimination and they examined how to encourage acceptance between young people from different communities.

There were opportunities for young people to share and hear personal stories from other young people from different communities and backgrounds. An exemplar Session Plan is included in Appendix 3.



Practical activities, building relationships and encouraging acceptance



Practical activities: building trust between each other



The young people used a variety of evaluation methods such as voice box, when the young people talked about how they felt the project was going. We used spiral evaluations, with a spiral drawn on a flipchart and young people wrote on it what they thought of the sessions.

At the end of the programme the young people completed the CRED enhancement scheme evaluation.

Strengths:

At every stage of the project there was the promotion of equality of opportunity through the challenging of oppressions such as racism and young people are given the opportunity to express their fears and opinions in a safe and secure environment. The young people in the group included 'respect' when designing their group contract. They discussed having respect in their contract meant that people should be aware of what they are saying and how it impacts on others.

Challenges:

There was apprehension from the young people at the beginning, especially before going to the residential. It was essential to create a safe space for the young people to feel secure and to build up trusting relationships with each other. This took time and was challenging at times, but was extremely valuable in the long run.

There were some very strong racist and homophobic behaviours and attitudes from a minority of the young people. One young person in particular from the BME community appeared very racist in terms of telling racist and xenophobic jokes. The young person was made aware at the start of the programme that this behaviour was unacceptable in our group.

Project Outcomes:

As a result the young people have:

- increased awareness and understanding of issues facing young people from B.M.E/Newcomer communities;
- increased confidence to challenge racism, prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination;
- increased understanding of their own identity, foster tolerance for others and have the ability to develop relationships and partnerships with others;
- participated in a social outing as celebration of achievement at the end of the programme.
- Young people have joined the local youth council and youth forums and are engage in other youth service projects.

This project has very clearly met the overarching aim of CRED ‘to contribute to improving relations between communities.’

Links to CRED Policy Aim And Objectives

Outcomes and evidence of addressing the aim and objectives of the CRED Policy:

This project has clearly equipped the young people with the ability and insight to take on and tackle issues such as racism, discrimination and challenge negative attitudes towards those from different communities;

- **Evidence:** The group of young people had excellent opportunities to explore and discuss a range of issues in a safe environment. The evaluations clearly indicated the benefits of the residential and the 12 week programme in challenging their perceptions and in encouraging them to accept the diversity. One particular young person had demonstrated clear intra-racism attitudes prior to engaging in the project. During the project, his perceptions and attitudes were explored, discussed and challenged. He was given time and a safe to discuss his feelings and share his stories. He then had opportunities to listen to others, participate in a range of issue based workshops to help him explore and to challenge his racist attitudes. As a result, he is now much more tolerant and accepting to others and has developed good friendships with young people from other backgrounds outside of the youth club setting.

“Receiving CRED funding enabled me to provide young people with the opportunity to equip them with the capacity and necessary skills and knowledge base that will enable them to become full participating and active citizens at both a micro and macro community level.”

Inclusion Youth Worker

The project provided opportunities for the young people to contribute actively to their own learning through taking personal responsibility, thinking and making decisions and by being part of a group;

- **Evidence:** the young people participated in a number of workshops and they had opportunities to share their stories, ideas, opinions and talk about their backgrounds with each other. The sessions were mainly active learning, with the facilitators there to guide the discussions, not to dictate the learning. As a result, the young people had time to explore issues such as sectarianism and racism and made decisions for themselves or within group settings. For a few of the young people their confidence has developed as a result of the project, for example:

"I tend not to talk in big groups, but in this group I feel like I can. It has really helped me speak out."

Ellen, one of the participants.

Young people have been able to develop their own self-respect and a respect for others and there was a clear promotion of equality;

Perceptions and attitudes were challenged;

- **Evidence:** a group contract was developed by the young people where it was discussed what was acceptable behaviour and language, how people would be challenged if they expressed an opinion that was racist, sectarian etc. While it was accepted that everyone was entitled to their own opinion they had to be aware of what they said and the impact it may have on the group. The young people also agreed that when challenging they would not do it in an aggressive manner as they didn't want anyone to feel personally attacked.

Through observations and in their evaluations the young people have clearly indicated that they value and respect difference and have engaged positively with it, in particular race and religion;

- **Evidence:** The young people participated in a 3 day residential and 12 week programme where they had the opportunity to engage with others from

different communities. A number of them have developed very positive relationships and solid friendships with each other outside of their youth group. This has promoted the broader vision and practice for embedding community relations, equality and diversity among other young people.

With prejudice and fear being potential barriers to learning, young people undoubtedly gained the opportunity to overcome these barriers and enable them to fulfil their own learning potential.

“It was good to talk to other young people and find out what their lives are like.”

Young Person

“I now understand different people better and the words used to describe other people.”

Young Person

Recommendations for future work:

- There is a need for BME young people and their families to know more about each other’s religions, culture and backgrounds. The evidence from this project has clearly indicated that there are tensions and racial attitudes within and between BME communities.
- There is a need for more work to support BME young people, within their own communities and in integrating with other communities.
- Further work/projects focused on CRED work between young people from NI and between new foreign nationals from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds.

Appendix 1: Residential Programme: St. Columb's Park House – Derry City

Monday 8th – Wednesday 10th July 2013

Day 1

Monday 8th July

- 10:00am: Bus Departs Armagh
- 12:00pm: Arrive at St Columb's Park House – lunch, room allocation, house rules
- 1:00pm: Icebreakers, Group work session (Contract, Fears and Expectations)
- 5:30pm:
- 7:00pm Night Line (outdoor clothes for this activity)
- 11:00pm: Movie / Games / Social Time
- 1am: Lights out & Bedtime

Day 2

Tuesday 9th July

- 8:00am: Wake up call
- 8:30am: Breakfast
- 10:00am: Teambuilding Activity (Outdoor)
- 1:30pm: Lunch
- 2:30pm: City & Sight Seeing Walking Tour
- 6:00pm: Dinner
- 7:00: Group work session: what is CRED/community mapping/feedback
- 10.30pm: Movie / Games / Social Time
- 1.00am: Lights Out & Bedtime

Day 3

Wednesday 10th July

- 8.30am: Wake up Call
- 9.00am: Breakfast & Pack up rooms
- 10.30am: Group work session, "What has come up that needs to be developed further?" Programme plan for future work -Evaluation & Close
- 1.30pm: Lunch
- 2.30pm: Depart – Derry
- 4.30pm: Bus Arrives back in Dungannon

Appendix 2: 12 week Diversity Programme

Week	Theme	Description
1	Introduction to Diversity.	Young people got the opportunity to explore diversity and what it means to them and their community
2	Respect activity	Explore what an "ism" is - racism, sectarianism etc and define prejudice & discrimination
3	Black, Minority and Ethnic communities.	Exploration of BME communities and the ever changing population of Northern Ireland
4	Race, faith & culture.	Young people looked at the differences and similarities between race, faith and cultural practices.
5	The Jewish community.	Understanding the Jewish community.
6	The Traveller community.	Exploration of the traveller community, dispel myths and truths of traveller culture
7	Exploring cultural points of view.	Exploration of cultural points of view eg women's roles, education
8	L.G.B.T community.	Challenging homophobia workshop exploring stereotypes and issues affecting LGBT young people
9	Disability awareness.	Exploration of disabilities and the impact it may have on people, appropriate language, attitudes and hidden disabilities
10	Putting into practice "The same event through different eyes".	Young people imagine themselves with a different identity - with another skin and hair colour perception of identity, race and gender and discuss an event.
11	Social/celebration event	Cinema Trip
12	Evaluation of project	Evaluate programme what went well, what would they change etc.

Appendix 3: Exemplar Session Outline

Session Planner & Review

Name of Project	Armagh CRED programme		
Date of Session	Wednesday 25 th September 2013		
Session Aim	Develop young people's understanding of Prejudice, discrimination, racism & homophobia,	Aim Met	
Session Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help young people understand the four words and develop awareness of different definitions of words To facilitate effective communication between group To help young people learn to appreciate the importance of language in discussing multicultural issues and how the process of discussion can help understanding. 	Objectives Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Time	Activity	Staff	Resources
3.30pm	Set up room Welcome young people/social time	Orla	
4pm	Icebreaker (young people decide)	Orla	
4.10pm	What is happening in the session		
4.15pm	Prejudice game-give each y.p a card taped to back with a description of someone different to them race/religion etc. get y.p to guess what their label is by the way the rest of the group react to them.		Index cards with descriptions
4.30pm	Feedback – how did y.p feel? What issues came out of this exercise?		
4.50pm	Break		
5pm	Break into groups define prejudice, discrimination, racism & homophobia		Flipchart markers
5.15pm	Feedback		Definition of words
5.45pm	Evaluation		
Evaluation Methods & Worker Review	<p>Young people participated well in this and enjoyed the activity where they had to get up and move around, it was interesting to see and hear their assumptions and prejudices about their friends when they had a different label.</p> <p>The major point of this session for me was to get the young people talking about these terms and how language can mean different things to different people and as the group is made of different cultures I wanted to get the young people to understand that the language that may have been acceptable in the countries they lived in before may or may not be acceptable in NI.</p>		

