IMPACT EVALUATION OF PEACE IV OBJECTIVE 2.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 14 – 24

Final Report
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Background

Throughout the Northern Ireland peace process, funding from the European Union has sought to support and address economic and social development in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The current PEACE IV Programme focuses on a narrow range of activities to ensure that funding brings about significant change in four key areas: Shared Education, Children and Young People, Shared Spaces and Services, and Building Positive Relations. Specific Objective 2.1, Children and Young People, branded as PEACE4Youth, prioritises those young people aged between 14-24 years who are most disadvantaged / excluded / marginalised, and who have deep social, emotional, and good relations needs. Many of these young people are at risk of becoming engaged in antisocial, violent, or dissident activity, are disengaged from the peace process, and are not in formal education, training, or employment. The overall financial allocation of €37.6m (EDRF + match funding) was based on the desire to achieve significant regional impact through the support of funded projects designed to provide young people with the opportunity to participate in shared, outcomes-focused programmes of activity incorporating quality-learning experiences with an aim to, *"Enhance the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society."* Phase I of the PEACE4Youth Programme commenced in the late autumn of 2017 and continued until late autumn 2018. Implementation of Phase II (2018-2022) was subject to the results of a positive evaluation of Phase I, conducted at the Programme level.

Theory of Change

The Programme-level theory of change anticipates that through participation in purposefully designed projects, young people would develop capabilities in relation to three Programme outcome areas - Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship. These capabilities in turn, would support broader societal change.

Output Indicators

Initial targeting aimed for an anticipated 7,400 participants across both Phases of the Programme.
- Phase I: 1,875 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes;
- Phase II: 5,525 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes.

A participant was considered to have completed the programme if they have either engaged in at least 80% of the sessions or days agreed for that participant as part of their individual development plan, or, where relevant, passed an agreed form of assessment related to the programme. Projects were encouraged to incorporate at least 3-4 days of participant contact activity per week. At the Programme level, it was anticipated that 80% of participants will be from Northern Ireland and 20% from the Border Region of Ireland with variation across individual funded projects.

Outcome Indicators

Funded projects and activities were required to show clear development of sustainable participant capabilities in relation to each of the three Programme outcome areas and their indicators. These included:

Good relations content will contribute to lower levels of community division, sectarianism and racism, and will make a positive contribution to reconciliation. Specifically, the participant will develop, understanding of and respect for diversity; an awareness of sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others; an understanding of their own identity; respect for others from different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations; and a positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background.

Personal development content will develop the social and emotional or 'soft' skills of the participant including, an increased self-awareness, understanding, confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; relationships, working effectively with others, and leadership; resilience and determination; and other relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being.

Citizenship content will develop the capacity of the participant to make a positive contribution towards their participation in family, community and society. This will involve developing their knowledge and understanding of their role and developing capabilities for engagement with useful services; positive participation in community structures, initiatives and democratic processes; volunteering in communities of place and / or interest; positive family and community relations.

Result Indicators

Through these actions it was anticipated there would be a measurable increase at the regional level in the percentage of 16-year-olds who:

- Socialise and/or play sport with people from a different religious community from a baseline of "very often" at 43% and "sometimes" at 24% to target values of 50% and 28% respectively.
- Think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago from a baseline of 45% to a target value of 50%.

- Think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years-time from a baseline of 38% to a target value of 45%.

These result indicators were monitored from information collected by the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey and evaluated using the 2022 survey against baseline data gathered from the 2013 Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey.

Project Activity

To ensure that the design, duration, and intensity of PEACE4Youth would lead to a transformative experience, which both improves individual life circumstances and contributes to a more cohesive society, all funded projects and activities, were tailored to the needs and interests of participants with activities and methods underpinned by an agreed set of principles and practice standards. In total, 11 funded projects received funding through the PEACE4Youth Programme. Each project represented a collaboration of several different organisations, with one lead partner. These projects include:

- **Amplify (**€4,568,998.60): YouthAction NI in partnership with Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, NI Youth Forum, and Patrician Youth.
- **Breakthrough** (€3,193,909.75): Ashton Community Trust in partnership with StreetBeat Youth Project, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Loughview Community Action Partnership, Newtownabbey Arts & Cultural Network, Ardoyne Youth Enterprises, Mount Vernon Community Development Forum, City Life Centre, and Youth Education Health & Advice.
- **Futures Project** (€3,640,751): Belfast Metropolitan College in partnership with Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Start360, and Southern Regional College.
- **Helping Equality Respecting Others Enabling Success (HEROES)** (€1,785,364.44): Mencap NI in partnership with Londonderry YMCA, Devenish Partnership Forum, and Health Service Executive.
- **Journeys** (€5,074,283.26): Springboard Opportunities in partnership with Roe Valley Residents Association, Cavan & Monaghan Education and Training Board, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Foras na Gaeilge, Ulster-Scots Agency, Belfast Central Mission, MACs Supporting Children & Young People, The Welcome Organisation, Queens University Belfast, Christian Brothers' School, Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast Model School for Girls, Belfast Boys Model School, Burnfoot Community Development Association, Benbradagh Community Association, Black Community Association, Greysteel Community Enterprise (Vale Centre), Teach na nDaoine Family Resource Centre, Belfast Area Partnership, Little Flower Girls School, St Patrick's College, and Bearnageeha.

- **Mpower** (€3,541,772.95): YMCA Ireland in partnership with Southern Region YMCAs (Lurgan YMCA and Portadown YMCA), North Down YMCA, Youthbase YMCA Newcastle, Belfast YMCA, South East Antrim Region (Carrickfergus YMCA and Larne YMCA), Londonderry YMCA, YMCA Lisburn Ltd, and Young Women's Christian Association - Monaghan Branch.
- **Peace Bytes** (€3,795,063.93): Peace Bytes in partnership with TIDES Training, Moville and District Family Resource Centre, and Newtownabbey Arts & Cultural Network.
- **Strive** (€3,979,785.60): Include Youth in partnership with Youth Initiatives NI, Newstart Education Centre, Northern Ireland Alternatives, and Lifford/Clonleigh Resource Centre.
- **The Third Space Project** (€3,714,910): Extern in partnership with The Verbal Arts Centre.
- **Transformation Education for Positive Relationships (TRANSFORM)** (€2,390,685): Youth Link NI in partnership with Youth Initiatives NI and Royal MENCAP.
- **YouthScape** (€3,994,559.07): South West College in partnership with Donegal Youth Services and TIDES Training.

All funded projects received guidance and support through a Quality and Impact Body. Led by Cooperation Ireland in collaboration with Ulster University, National Youth Council of Ireland, and POBAL, YouthPact (€1,407,852.69) was tasked with developing a strong, nurturing relationship with all projects through centralised activities and events, structured project visits, and ongoing quality and impact conversations.

Impact Evaluation

To ensure that the PEACE4Youth Programme met the requirements established through the Programme-level theory of change, all funded projects were assessed using quality distance-travelled measurements and project self-evaluation techniques aligned to the programme-level theory of change and evaluation framework. An Evaluation Plan was developed which outlines two types of evaluation; the first, evaluating the efficacy and effectiveness of the implementation mechanism established for the Programme and the second, evaluating the intervention logic of the three outcome areas and form a view of the effectiveness and impact of the investment. In November of 2017, the evaluation team from the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations at Queen's University, Belfast was contracted to complete the latter impact evaluation. To date, the team has delivered on the Project Initiation Document, the Phase I Impact Evaluation Report, in coordination with RSM UK, the PEACE IV Impact Evaluation Conference 2019, and the Phase II-midterm Impact Evaluation Report. The current document, the PEACE4Youth Impact Evaluation Final Report, builds upon and extends their insights, but acts as a standalone document evaluating the overall Programme from start to completion.

Approach

To evaluate the intervention logic, effectiveness, and impact of the investment in the PEACE4Youth Programme, the evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach examining both primary and secondary data including:

- Review of project monitoring data
- An online project and cohort profile survey
- An online/paper participant profile survey
- An online/paper longitudinal survey completed pre-intervention (Time 1), mid-intervention (Time 2), post-intervention (time 3), and at 12-month post-intervention (monitoring survey) by young people participating in PEACE4Youth funded projects exploring the three outcome areas and their subsequent indicators, accreditation received, and plans following project completion
- An online early-exit survey of participants leaving project activity prior to completion
- Review and analysis of the 2013 to 2022 Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey datasets
- A series of three focus groups with key project personnel exploring internal and external factors impacting participants and project implementation
- Attendance at a random selection of YouthPact meetings and training events
- Review of publications and training materials developed by YouthPact and provided to project personnel

Together these sources of data allow for the exploration of both individual- and project-level factors that may influence Programme impact. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately using appropriate analytic techniques, while insights gleaned from one analysis informed the analysis of the other. This strategy enabled clear identification of potential success on output indicators, outcome areas and their indicators, and result indicators, as well as identification of aspects of the implementation approach that may influence project delivery. The following is a summary of the major findings from the Final Report.

Theory of Change

Output Indicators[1]

Phase I (2017 – 2018)

Initial Programme-level targeting aimed for an anticipated 1,875 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes. Following initial

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[1] These figures are not fully verified and are subject to change.

Project-level targets estimating a total of 1,980 participants, several projects revised their initial targets resulting in a new Phase I target of 1,680. Records suggest that at the conclusion of Phase I, a total of 1,625 young people had completed approved programmes. While this is **lower** than the initial Programme-level target of 1,875 it is **consistent** with the revised Project-level target of 1,680.

Phase II (2019 – 2022)

Initial Programme-level targeting aimed for an anticipated 5,525 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes. Following initial Project-level targets anticipated 5,806 participants; however, several projects revised their initial targets because of Phase I achievement resulting in a Project-level target of 6,278 participants. Records suggest that at the conclusion of Phase II, a total of 6,307 young people had completed approved programmes. This is **higher** than the initial Phase II Programme-level target, as well as the revised Phase II Project-level target.

Across both phases of the PEACE4Youth Programme, 7,932 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completed approved programmes. This is **higher** than the Programme-level target of 7,400 participants.

Outcome Indicators

The longitudinal surveys completed by young people engaged in project activity was used to assess the distance travelled for the three outcome areas and their subsequent outcome indicators. At the conclusion of the Programme, demographic information on young people completing the surveys had been collected from 4,676 young people (862, Phase I; 3,554 Phase II core; Phase II Illustrated and Arabic version), providing detailed information about participations from all funded projects. Across the duration of the Programme, there was a fairly even distribution of participants completing the surveys in terms of gender (Phase I 51.9%, Phase II 50.1% male; Phase I 47.1%, Phase II 48.7% female). The age range was skewed towards younger participants with the majority 13-17 years old (Phase I 53.5%; Phase II 72.5%) and the minority 18-24 years old (Phase I 42.9%, Phase II 25.5%) and the distinction was more so in Phase II than Phase I. The community background also showed a skew with consistently more young people reporting that they were from the Catholic community (Phase I 50.7%, Phase II 59.4%) than from the Protestant community (Phase I 25.6%, Phase II 23.8%). There was a consistent group of young people who reported that they were from neither the Catholic nor Protestant community (Phase I 12.6%, Phase II 12.1%). With approximately four out of five young people were from Northern Ireland (Phase I 80.5%, Phase II 78.5%) and one out of five from the Republic of Ireland (Phase I 19.5%, Phase II 21.5%).

The ethnic background of the young people completing the surveys was predominately white (Phase I 92.3%, Phase II 90.3%), with approximately one in ten (Phase I 7.7%, Phase II 9.4%) participants indicating that they were from a minority ethnic community (including Irish Travellers). In terms of disability, a sizeable group indicated that they had a disability (Phase I 13.3%, Phase II 13.9%), while a relatively smaller percentage were unsure (Phase I 3.4%, Phase II 5.7%). Of note, the percentage of young people who reported they were from a minority ethnic group or had a disability is substantially higher than those found in the 2011 NI Census (1.8% minority ethnic population; 2.7% 15- to 19-year-olds and 3.1% 20- to 24-year-olds reporting a disability). In addition, 9.9% in Phase I and 14.1% in Phase II indicated that they were a carer for someone they lived with who was sick or elderly or who had a disability.

To explore distance travelled across each of the three outcome areas and their indicators, wherever possible, the surveys were matched across three time points – beginning, mid-point, and end of involvement with PEACE4Youth. The evaluation team adopted a 'repeated measures' approach to the analysis, which enables the analysis of changes in mean scores over three or more points in time. In other words, this analysis measures the distance travelled in the core outcome areas.

Overall, for the **Good Relations** indicators there is *clear evidence of positive distance travelled*. Indicating that young people had enhanced their capacity to form positive and effective relationships with young people from a different background than themselves, including those from the other community, a different jurisdiction, and from other ethnic backgrounds. This included an increase in understanding of and respect for diversity; an increased awareness of and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of others; a stronger understanding of their own identity; and an increased respect for others of different community and cultural backgrounds; abilities and orientations. All measurement scales for these indicators showed significant change, save for reduction in sectarian behaviour which consistently across Phase I and Phase II showed no evidence of a reduction.

For **Personal Development**, there is *clear evidence of positive distance travelled* with all outcome indicators and their associated measurement scales showed significant change. This means that because of participation in PEACE4Youth projects, young people reported an increase in self-awareness and understanding; confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; positive relationships; working effectively with others; leadership; resilience and determination; and relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being.

Finally, for **Citizenship**, there is *clear evidence of positive distance travelled* as change was evident across all but 1 indicator. Specifically, clear change was found for engagement with useful services and volunteering in communities of place; participation in community structures, initiatives, and democratic processes; and family and community relations. There was no significant change, however, for a reduction in antisocial behaviours.

The majority of these effects were significant regardless of the duration of the project, and, while there may have been a 'dampening effect' over the Covid-19 lockdown, the positive effects still held up. That is undeniable evidence of the positive impact of the PEACE4Youth Programme on the outcome indicators. Given the tremendous reach of the PEACE4Youth Programme, it is noteworthy that there was no significant change found for sectarian and antisocial behaviours. Closer examination of the mean scores for these two variables find that only a small minority of individuals reported engaging in these behaviours and those that did reported a low frequency. It may be that the measure was too "blunt" leading participants to report in a more socially desirable way or it is possible that these low scores represent an accurate depiction of the negative behaviours that these young people engaged in.

Result Indicators

Socialise and/or Play Sport

Results derived from the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey (YLTS) indicated that 58% of 16-year-olds socialised and/or played sports with people from a different religious community (30% 'very often', 28% 'sometimes'). This is significantly **lower** than PEACE IV Programme baseline of 67% (43% "very often', 24% 'sometimes') as well as the 2023 target of 78% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change (50% 'very often', 28% 'sometimes'). While the 2023 'very often' target of 50% is not yet met, the 28% 'sometimes' target is currently being met.

For participants completing the participant surveys during Phase I, the majority (68%) indicated that they sometimes, often, or very often interacted with young people from a different community background than themselves. This figure is slightly higher than the comparison group derived of 16-year-olds completing the 2013 Young Life and Times Survey (68%) but **lower** than the 2023 target of 78% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change. While the exact measure was not collected for Phase II, data exploring the extent to which participants had both face-to-face and online interactions with members of the other community showed that the same proportion as Phase I (68%) indicated that they sometimes, often, or very often interacted with young people from a different community background than themselves.

Relations Better Now than 5-years ago

Results derived from the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey show that 37% of 16-year-olds believed that relations between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities are better now than they were five years ago. This is **lower** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline rate of 45% as well as the target rate of 50% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

For participants completing Phase I participant survey, 64% (62% from the Phase II survey) felt that relations were better now than five years ago. This is **higher** than PEACE IV Programme baseline of 45% as well as the 2023 target value of 50%.

Relations will be Better in 5-years

Results derived from the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey showed that 37% of 16-year-olds felt that relations will be between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities will be better in five years' time. This is **lower** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline rate of 38% as well as the 2023 target rate of 45% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

For participants completing the Phase I and Phase II surveys, 60% felt that relations will be better in five years' time. This is **higher** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline rate of 38% as well as the 2023 target value of 45% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

While the Young Life and Times (based on 16-year-olds) and surveys of participants on the PEACE4Youth Programme (14–24-year-olds) are not directly comparable, results suggest that participants on the PEACE4Youth Programme are reporting more positive outcomes than 16-year-olds at a Northern Ireland level across all three programme result indicators.

Qualifications and Progression

Additionally, participants who completed the Time 3 survey were asked to indicate what their intentions were upon finishing their PEACE IV project, and whether they had obtained any qualifications during their involvement in the programme. At the conclusion of Phase I and Phase II the majority of young people indicated that they had clear plans for their future either in terms of education-based opportunities (Phase I 55.2%, Phase II 54.0%), job training opportunities (Phase I 22.1%, Phase II 19.1%), paid work (Phase I 21.2%, Phase II 30.8%), volunteering (Phase I 17.8%, Phase II 22.0%), or another youth project (Phase I 20.1%, Phase II 23.8%). A minority of young people indicated that they had no clear plans moving forward (Phase I 20.1%, Phase II 26.7%). In terms of accreditations achieved by participants by the end of their PEACE4Youth projects, at the conclusion of Phase I and Phase II the majority of young people indicated that they had received at

least 1 accreditations or qualifications (Phase I 56.6%, Phase II 62.5%), including those in the areas of personal development (Phase I 36.4%, Phase II 30.9%), good relations (Phase I 28.2%, Phase II 29.0%), and/or citizenship (Phase I 21.4%, Phase II 23.2%).

Examining Contextual Factors

Internal and External Factors Impacting Project Implementation and Delivery

Three series of focus groups were conducted with key project personnel to explore in greater detail the internal and external issues which they feel may have affected participations and project implementation. In total, of the approximately 240 youth workers employed over the course of the PEACE4Youth Programme, 107 project personnel from Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland took part in semi-structured focus groups. The focus groups generally lasted for 60 minutes and consisted of 3 to 9 participants representing project coordinators, youth workers, monitoring officers, and specialist youth mentors. Focus groups, when possible, were conducted in person at a venue near participants and following the Covid-19 pandemic a number were conducted online allowing for a diverse range of personnel from across Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland to meet.

The first series of focus groups conducted in 2018 was designed to discuss the key challenges and success factors affecting project implementation and any internal and external issues which they felt had impacted (positively or negatively) their ability to achieve their specific project objectives. Findings suggested that a number of "teething issues" in the initial formulation of the PEACE4Youth Programme, including:

- Challenges developing effective collaborations and partnerships due to differing organisational culture
- Perceived competition from other PEACE IV funded programmes and governmental initiatives
- Difficulties recruiting along specified recruitment criteria
- Frustrations with administrative workload (e.g., tight deadlines, heavy workloads, etc.)
- Young people's reluctance to engage with community relations work

However, a number of facilitating factors were revealed; including:

- Development of innovative recruitment strategies
- The importance of building rapport and developing strong young person - youth worker relationships

- The formation of cooperative and collaborative relationships between PEACE4Youth funded projects and within communities
- Use of flexible work practices and adapting project activity and content
- High levels of support from SEUPB project workers and Quality and Impact Body (YouthPact)

The second series of focus groups conducted mid-way through Phase II explored successes and challenges implementing as the projects began Phase II, the connection between core project activities and achievement of outcomes, external influences that have helped or hindered project impact, and recommendations for future support and programme design.

Discussions related to the **evolution of practice from Phase I into Phase II** pointed to a sense that projects had settled in and smoothed out initial teething problems resulting in:
- Stronger relationships between partners allowing for projects to draw from wider networks and resources
- Streamlined bureaucratic processes
- Working with SEUPB project officers to deliver more bespoke project activity
- Development of in-house activities and toolkits
- Refining project activity based upon feedback from early cohorts of young people
- Confidence in understanding of target group and how to work with them effectively

That being said, initial teething problems from Phase I had developed into more fundamental challenges, including:
- High level of needs among the target group of young people
- Perceived saturation in particular geographic areas limiting recruitment
- Continued difficulties recruiting young people from a Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist background
- Differing communication and practitioner approaches hindering effective collaborations and partnerships
- Bureaucratic pressures, workload, and the QUB evaluation survey

It was at this stage, however, best practice and key factors amplifying impact began to emerge, including:
- Person-centred, positive relationships between project staff and young people
- Where possible, developing positive relationships with parents and guardians
- Group work and diversity as a way to achieve social connections

- Importance of connecting good relations work to real life
- Residentials, outdoor work, and celebration events offer a bit of "magic"

When asked to think about the design of future peacebuilding programmes in light of the PEACE4Youth Programme, project personnel had clear recommendations moving forward.

- Greater care and attention to the complex needs of this specific target group of young people
- Opportunities to enroll in multiple projects
- Bespoke programmes offered based on the needs of the young person; specifically in relation to the level of commitment
- Attention paid to the best ways to transition young people out of the programme
- Where appropriate, engaging with and involving family and wider community structures
- Reconsider the target balance based upon a growing percentage of young people self-identifying as "Other"
- Community relations work needs to begin with a clear understanding of one's own identity and building confidence in discussing contentious topics with others
- Greater attention and thought given to what active citizenship entails
- Developing more effective, and time efficient, ways of capturing success

The 2020 focus groups conducted during this time, were completed just as lockdown restrictions were easing in July 2020. As such, these discussions centred on the challenges that were presented by the move from face-to-face to online delivery at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as factors that had promoted programme successes during this time.

Discussions revealed the *tremendous efforts and commitment* that programme staff had gone through making a swift and creative move into the online delivery for participants in the advent of lockdown in March 2020. In all respects of the programme, staff were doing what they could, working long hours (sometimes at risk of burnout), to engage young people and create a positive impact, even though much of the programme impact has previously been attributed to factors that involve face-to-face experiences. Young people's levels of engagement with online activities were reported as varied for different reasons, but by quickly developing their expertise and using multiple methodologies (often because of the sharing of ideas between professionals about promoting engagement), this filtered into a mainly positive experience for many young people, despite them missing certain key experiences such as residentials and celebration events. Youth workers believed that online delivery would likely form part of their delivery for the foreseeable future (and indeed, that despite the challenges of online engagement, there were some key benefits in doing so). As such, there was a need for further clarity about best practice for online delivery in relation to the different

outcome areas, as well as expectations from SEUPB about the verification of activities and online contact hours.

The third series of focus groups were conducted in 2022. At this final phase of the evaluation, as project activity was ending, participant recruitment for the focus groups was found challenging. Many youth workers at this stage were either redundant or left their jobs in pursuit of other jobs. Discussions centred on the successes and challenges of the Programme, the sustainability of the Programme moving forward, the impacts of the closure of the programme, and recommendations for future projects. Major themes focused on,

Key factors promoting recruitment, engagement, and retention:
- Programme design (qualifications, financial incentives, sustained nature of the programme)
- Focus on personal development
- Programme flexibility to craft adaptive approaches tailored to the target group
- Professional development for project personnel to gain training, network, and share best practice

Persistent challenges:
- Geographical difficulties with recruitment
- Bureaucratic and process challenges to do with transitions between
- Perception of unrealistic expectations by funders in relation to target numbers, programme hours, and number of outcome indicators
- 'All-consuming' nature of the work

Closure concerns:
- Impact on young people; particularly, vulnerable young people and early school leavers
- Loss in highly experienced and trained staff due to redundancies
- Gaps in service within the charity and voluntary sector

Sustainability and lasting impact:
- Young people's enhanced life skills, resilience, and social connections
- Skills and qualifications empowered young people to go on to further work, training or study
- Professional development of young workers

Recommendations for future programming:
- Additional flexibility regarding completion for individuals who require more or less time

- Flexibility around recruitment criteria, particularly in respect to the diversification of identity in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland
- Continuation of programming supporting qualifications and skills training
- Additional training for youth workers in mental health provision for young people
- Additional mental health support for youth workers to safeguard wellbeing

Maximising Impact: The Role of YouthPact

The positive influence of the Quality and Impact Body could not be overstated by the project personnel. Across each series of focus groups, practitioners praised the quality of YouthPact's staff and their expertise. Trainings and support activities offered knowledge-exchange opportunities to address challenges and share best practice. YouthPact was positioned as integral to overcoming some of the significant challenges faced in Phase I and there is evidence to suggest that the project coordinator meetings and partnership development sessions supported the positive partnership development found in Phase II. Further, the bespoke resources, toolkits, and training events which have been developed for project staff raised the knowledge base and skill set of the key workers who are trying to deliver programme content and improve the lives of young people. This was critical during the lockdown as youth workers faced considerable challenges moving face-to-face activity to an online format.

Conclusions

Stepping back and looking at the wealth of data collected across the duration of the PEACE4Youth Programme there is undeniable evidence that funded projects have positively impacted the lives of participating young people for the better. In line with the Programme-level theory of change, through participation in purposefully designed projects, young people developed capabilities in relation to the three Programme outcome areas of Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship.

Output Indicators

Looking over the completion rates for young people successfully participating in and completing PEACE4Youth funded projects, the overall target was indeed reached by the end of the Programme. By the time the Programme had reached its conclusion, 7,932 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completed approved programmes. A figure that was higher than the target of 7,400. However, closer inspection of the numbers at each phase of the programme reveal that many anticipated targets may have been too ambitious, particularly at Phase I. Projects needed time to determine effective strategies for recruiting young people and once they did there was considerable uptake in completion rates for Phase II. Recruitment success was

strongly impacted by the positive reputation developed by the projects and word of mouth from young people completing the projects in Phase I and early cohorts within Phase II.

However, there is a disproportionate percentage of young people who self-report that they were from the Catholic community in comparison to those who report they were from the Protestant community. This is consistent with youth workers who vocalised that they were finding it difficult to recruit appropriate percentages of young people from Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist areas. Further, the geographical spread of projects and young people showed a high degree of "clumping" resulting in what the youth workers described as areas which had reached saturation by end of Phase II – often occurring in more urban areas of the region. Findings from the focus groups indicated that recruitment within the Republic of Ireland was particularly difficult due to the limited incentives available; a challenge that was amplified when young people from the two jurisdictions were brought together and comparisons were made. However, we would argue that based upon subgroup analyses, it was these tricky groups to engage with that showed some of the strongest improvement. Recruitment and engagement may be difficult, but clearly it is worth the effort. Moving forward, we recommend future programming carefully considers how funded projects can be supported so that they can engage with these groups in a meaningful way.

Outcome Indicators

We feel confident saying that because of involvement in the funded projects, young people who responded to the surveys showed significant distance travelled on each of the three outcome areas, and an overwhelming number of indicators for each area. Young people developed an understanding of and respect for diversity, an awareness and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of others; an understanding of their own identity; respect for others from a different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities, and orientations; and a positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background. As well, young people who responded to the surveys showed increased self-awareness, understanding, confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; relationships, working effectively with others, and leadership; resilience and determination; and other relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being. Finally, that young people who responded to the surveys developed their knowledge and understanding of their role and developing capabilities for engagement useful services; positive participation in community structures, initiatives, and democratic processes; volunteering in communities of place and / or interest; and positive family and community relations.

Additionally, the number of indicators within each of the three major areas that showed positive distance travelled significantly increased over the course Programme - from analyses of the Phase

I dataset, to the mid-term analyses conducted on the Phase II dataset, to the final set of analyses of the complete Phase II dataset. This suggests a clear growth in the skills and reach of project activities across the outcome areas and their indicators.

Our recommendation for future programming, however, is to caution against the sheer number of indicators, particularly vague indicators, which participants were required to show positive distance travelled. Project personnel consistently vocalised the challenges they, and the participants, had with the time-consuming nature of the evaluation survey used to measure progression on these indicators. We do not disagree. Using academically rigorous and psychometrically sound measurement tools to explore the distance travelled across each of these indicators resulted in a very long survey during Phase I. Even after Phase II when the evaluation team was able to engage with a youth advisory forum to redraft the survey, remove redundant items, minimise scales due to significant overlap between indicators, and minimise some indicators down to one or two items the survey was still far too long and demanding. Perhaps for future evaluations more creative measurement tools can be capitalised upon, particularly ones which can be used to engage young people in project activity. But first and foremost, the number of indicators needs to be reduced.

Result Indicators

Three result indicators were used to measure potential change at the societal level as a result of PEACE4Youth Programming; each focused on the Good Relations outcome area. These included measurements of cross-community contact in more social or informal interactions (socialise and/or play sport), as well as beliefs that relations between the two communities were better than 5-years ago and would continue to improve in the subsequent 5-years. Not only were targets not reached, but they in fact fell **below** baseline estimates. Participants in PEACE4Youth Programming, however, did reach, or quite close to reaching, these targets for the result indicators.

As an evaluation team, we feel that there are two reasons to be skeptical of the YLT as an appropriate source for measuring societal change based upon PEACE4Youth Programming. First, an examination of the results of each of the three indicators from 2013-2022 reveals a, not surprising, decline between the 2019 and 2020/21 survey during the Covid-19 pandemic. By 2022, none of the indicators had returned to pre-Covid measures. A second reason is based upon the discrepancy between the target group of young people involved in the PEACE4Youth Programming and the sample which the YLT targets – a representative group of 16-year-olds. Young people recruited between the ages of 14-24 years who are not in employment, education, or training, who come from some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged areas, who often suffer from multiple risk factors, and who are susceptible to recruitment and/or victimisation by paramilitary groups are a very niche

group of young people. There is every reason to believe that this group should think, feel, and behave differently to the wider population of young people in Northern Ireland. Which is in fact the very reason that this group was approached for this specific objective. To observe societal change based upon this group's experiences with the programme, we believe, it is important to track their progression over time as the positive impact of the participation ripples out into other areas of their life. For example, it would be relatively easy to include specific measures that ask about participation in the programme within the broader Northern Ireland Young Life and Times, as well as the Northern Ireland Life and Times which targets adult age-ranged respondents. This variable can then be analysed in relation to other responses found within these impressive datasets.

Facilitating Factors

There are several key factors which led to the incredible success of the PEACE4Youth Programme. Considerable thought and detail went into the design of the Programme with attention paid to both theoretical and practical considerations. While much can be said about the importance of the structural elements such as the layout and design of the overall Programme and specific projects, we believe that the biggest impact upon success was the work of the youth workers to develop positive, supporting relationships with young people facing tremendous obstacles in terms of their own life story and because of the impact of Covid-19. Of prominence was the role of mentoring relationships and the positive dynamic created between youth workers and young people, the role of diversity within group work, and the 'magic' of residentials to cement learning and provide opportunities for more informal development.

We feel, however, that a less cited aspect of project activity was the ability the youth workers had to adapt their work not only to the young person, but also to the situation. For example, the evaluation found a plethora of evidence in relation to practitioners' high levels of skill, flexibility, creativity and innovation in adapting to the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown. Staff utilised their professional networks and the support of YouthPact to make the transition to online delivery as smooth and effective as possible, and a wide range of methodologies has been employed to make online delivery engaging for young people, for all three outcome areas (Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship).

It should not go without saying, that along the way, the projects and youth workers had an external organisation which acted to support and build their skill set along the way practitioners were keen to stress the positive impact of YouthPact's work on the efficacy of their partnerships and their practice, which filtered into positive impacts for young people. The evaluation highly recommends the

continued promotion of, and investment in support mechanisms like YouthPact in all programming moving forward.

Challenges

This is not to say that the funded projects did not face considerable challenges across the breadth of the Programme. In Phase I of the Programme, there were teething issues related to project initiation that were to be expected. For example, practitioners found it challenging to coordinate with partner organisations when setting up the programme and recruiting young people. For the most part, by the Phase II report organisational issues such as these had been overcome. There were areas, however, that remained a challenge across the duration of the Programme that need to be taken into consideration when discussing future programming.

Mental Health

Practitioners stressed that the challenges with working with this unique target population were not fully taken into account when designing the Specific Objective and that the high level of need and the complex mental health challenges they faced were often overwhelming.

There was consensus among participants that more mental health training support for youth workers are needed in future programming. Youth workers highlighted that many young people joining the programme came from vulnerable, disadvantaged backgrounds and often with complex mental health needs and that youth workers needed to be better equipped to handle difficult situations. They argued that mental health training not only related to 'crises mental health' but also related to day-to-day issues should be provided. It was also mentioned that dealing with young people with various mental health issues leaves the staff members vulnerable. Therefore, more training should be available to staff members to support young people and look after their own mental health. In future projects, a trained mental health practitioner or organisation was considered essential, especially when working with vulnerable groups.

Identity and Community Relations

Youth workers reported a growing number of marginalised young people who would benefit from the content of the PEACE4Youth projects but who indicated that they do not identify with either community background but were not necessarily from a minority ethnic community. Data suggest that those individuals choosing to identify as neither Catholic nor Protestant are making a conscious decision to move away from the traditional community identities which may define the area in which they are raised and the identity with their family may still hold. There was also a sense that for some young people, disclosing their community background or designating themselves as either Catholic

or Protestant was something that they were only comfortable doing later in their involvement as they built a relationship of trust with their youth worker.

This speaks to a wider discussion around the community relations content offered by the projects. Youth workers reported that young people felt that community relations and discussions of the Troubles had nothing to do with them. At the same time, they also reported feeling anxious and fearful about meeting young people from the other community and not wanting to go outside of their own area, and survey results suggest that there was not a decrease in reported sectarian behaviours. It could be that there is an issue with the way community relations is 'branded' or presented to them. Young people may not see the relevance of community relations if it is viewed as something from the past; in other words, if community relations activities are seen as a history lesson on The Troubles. Challenges around issues of identity and community relations are not new in Northern Ireland. However, we do believe that a new conversation needs to be had, potentially with young people themselves, about how we understand and think about identity in a post-conflict society.

Sustainability

Across the wide body of data collected through surveys and focus groups with young people and youth workers, as well as in-depth conversations with the Quality and Impact Body, there is a belief that for marginalised young people, the services that PEACE4Youth provided will always be in high demand. Youth workers felt that the closure of the Programme was a loss of opportunity and a 'safe spot' for young people to grow and develop. The space between PEACE4Youth and whatever will come next presents a considerable gap leaving many young people at a loss. While practitioners believed that elements of their project activity could be continued, specifically those around personal development, funding was considered a critical factor in the successful running of the programme as it allowed for the intensity, longevity, and resources necessary to provide support for the targeted group.

The gap between funding also presents a high degree of uncertainty for youth workers. Like young people, youth workers showed substantial growth in their skills over the course of the Programme. The on the ground training coupled with the training and resources developed by YouthPact resulted in a highly trained staff who now faced unemployment. While some may find employment in other areas of youth work, others would have to leave the sector entirely. This is a tremendous loss to the sector. For those who are able to stay in the sector, the strongest contribution PEACE4Youth may have is the impact that these youth workers will have moving forward.

Recommendations

Based upon the wealth of data collected through participant surveys and focus groups with key project personnel, as well as our own expertise in the fields of peace psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, and research and evaluation methodology, we offer the following recommendations.

Future programme development:

- Rethink recruitment criteria allowing for self-declared identity
- Explore best practices to target hard-to-reach groups
- Consult with youth workers to explore potentially reasons for the reported decrease in participation in sectarian behaviour found in the school-based cohort

Future programme delivery:

- Incorporate mentoring and group based activities
- Allow for formal and informal opportunities for positive intergroup contact
- Include opportunities for outdoor work, residentials, and celebratory events
- Provide space for youth workers to adapt to the young person and the situation
- Consult with young people about how we understand and think about identity in a post-conflict society
- Promotion of and investment in similar quality and support mechanisms like YouthPact
- Develop mechanisms to support the mental health of young people and practitioners

Future monitoring and evaluation:

- Ensure that the logic behind the Programme and Project theory of change are clear
- Don't limit ambition… but the limit number of (vague) indicators
- Provide clear operational definitions with universal understanding
- Promotion of evaluation approaches with a high degree of rigour
- Co-develop measurement tools with young people
- Incorporate a strong feedback loop between evaluators, QIB, and practitioners

Final Thoughts

Based upon the data collected, we believe that there is irrefutable evidence of the effectiveness in the attainment of the Specific Objective set and the anticipated results, as well as the efficacy in the relationship between the funding disbursed and the results achieved. Regarding lasting impact, there is no question that the lives of the young people involved in the Programme have improved, but we feel that the strongest contribution will be to the upskill and professional development training offered to the youth work sector. Future research will show whether these capabilities, for both young people and youth workers, will in turn support broader societal change.

We also would like to close by echoing the thoughts of the key project personnel involved in the PEACE4Youth Programming. Programming addressing the needs of this unique group of young people was desperately needed in Northern Ireland and the Border Region, and, unfortunately, will be a necessity in the future. Projects funded through PEACE4Youth reached a challenging group to recruit, engage, and elevate but they did so with overwhelming success. The objectives within PEACE4Youth and the aims of the funded projects align with the wider Northern Ireland peace process, Europe 2020 strategy, as well as the EU Horizontal principles. We can only hope that future programming of this nature is encouraged.

PART I: Overview

CHAPTER 1: Project Background

Northern Ireland is a society transitioning from violence to sustainable peace. The conflict in Northern Ireland is complex but can be understood as a struggle between those who wish to see Northern Ireland remain a part of the United Kingdom and those who wish to see 'the North' united with the Republic of Ireland. During the conflict, an approximately thirty-year stretch known as 'the Troubles', over 3,600 individuals were killed, with many more suffering from direct injuries or the loss of loved ones (Fitzduff & O'Hagan, 2009). Following the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and demilitarization, a relative calm emerged; however, Northern Ireland remains heavily divided. The European Union (EU) Programme for Peace and Reconciliation aims to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. As a sign of its commitment, the PEACE IV Programme provides support to projects that contribute towards the promotion of greater levels of peace and reconciliation with an emphasis on promoting cross-community relations and understanding.

Throughout the peace process, funding from the EU has sought to support and address economic and social development in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. In particular, following the 1994 ceasefires, the EU funded the first PEACE Programme with an aim to, 'reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation by increasing economic development and employment, promoting urban and rural regeneration, developing cross-border cooperation, and extending social inclusion.' To support the region as it moves away from conflict and towards a more peaceful society, the EU, in partnership with the British and Irish Governments, has supported three further programmes – PEACE II (2000-2004), PEACE II Extension (2004-2006), and PEACE III (2007-2013) – for a combined value of close to €2 billion.

The current PEACE IV Programme is defined through its thematic objective of promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and discrimination. Further, the European Regional Development Fund endeavours to contribute to promoting social and economic stability through actions aimed at promoting cohesion between communities. The PEACE IV Programme focuses on a narrow range of activities to ensure that funding brings about significant change. Informed by the PEACE III Programme and public consultation, the current PEACE IV Programme focused on four key priority areas for the period of 2014-2020.

These include:

- **Shared Education**: to increase the level of direct, sustained, and curriculum-based contact between pupils and teachers from all backgrounds;
- **Children and Young People**: to help young people, in particular. those not in education, employment and/or training to develop a greater understanding and respect for diversity, access new opportunities, and become active citizens;
- **Shared Spaces and Services**: to create new shared spaces and services where people from different communities and backgrounds can come together to learn from and respect each other;
- **Building Positive Relations**: to create a society characterised by good relations and respect, where cultural identity is celebrated and people can live, learn, and socialise together free from prejudice, hate, and intolerance.

A key theme that stretches across the priority areas is an investment in children and young people to reach their potential and contribute to a more cohesive society. The majority of children and young people in Northern Ireland and the border counties were born after the signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and do not have direct experience of the major civil unrest and violence of the Troubles; however, its rippling effects may still reach them. The annual cycles of violence and tension continue, and certain regions are more adversely affected by on-going sectarianism and the legacy of conflict than others. Ongoing conflict and division impact the lives of children and young people, as well as their families and communities (Taylor et al., 2014; 2016).

PEACE IV Specific Objective 2.1 (PEACE4Youth)

Specific Objective 2.1 of the PEACE IV Programme, branded PEACE4Youth, prioritised those young people aged between 14-24 years who are most disadvantaged / excluded / marginalised, and who have deep social, emotional, and good relations needs. Many of these young people are at risk of becoming engaged in antisocial, violent, or dissident activity, are disengaged from the peace process, and will not be in formal education, training, or employment. The overall financial allocation of €37.6m (EDRF + match funding) was based on the desire to achieve significant regional impact through the support of funded projects designed to provide young people with the opportunity to participate in shared, outcomes-focused programmes of activity incorporating quality-learning experiences with an aim to:

> *"Enhance the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society."*

Phase I of the PEACE4Youth Programme commenced in the late autumn of 2017 and continued until late autumn 2018. Implementation of Phase II (2018-2022) was subject to the results of a positive evaluation of Phase I, conducted at the Programme level.

Theory of Change

The Programme-level theory of change anticipated that through participation in purposefully designed projects, young people would develop capabilities in relation to three Programme outcome areas – Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship. These capabilities, in turn, would support broader societal change.

Figure 1:

PEACE4Youth Programme-Level Theory of Change
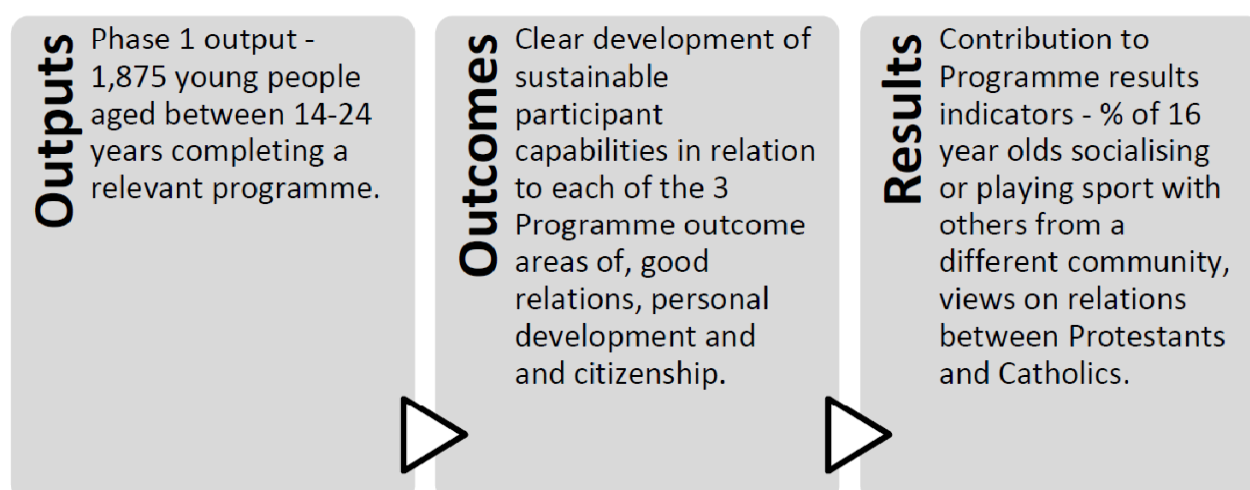
Output Indicators

Approved projects were implemented across two phases, with initial targeting aiming for an anticipated 7,400 participants across both Phases of the Programme.

- Phase I (2017-2018; i.e., approximately 16 months delivery): 1,875 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes;
- Phase II (2019-2021; i.e. 36 months delivery): 5,525 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes.

A participant was considered to have completed the programme if they have either engaged in at least 80% of the sessions or days agreed for that participant as part of their individual development plan, or, where relevant, passed an agreed form of assessment related to the programme. Projects

were encouraged to incorporate at least 3-4 days of participant contact activity per week. At the Programme level, it was anticipated that 80% of participants will be from Northern Ireland and 20% from the Border Region of Ireland with variation across individual funded projects.

Outcome Indicators

Funded projects and activities were required to show a clear development of sustainable participant capabilities in relation to each of the three Programme outcome areas of: Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship. Within each of the three Programme outcome areas, many specific "sub"-indicators were detailed to provide objective measures of the three outcome areas.

These included:

Good relations content will contribute to lower levels of community division, sectarianism and racism, and will make a positive contribution to reconciliation. Specifically, the participant will develop, understanding of and respect for diversity; an awareness of sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others; an understanding of their own identity; respect for others from different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations; and a positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background.

Personal development content will develop the social and emotional or 'soft' skills of the participant including, an increased self-awareness, understanding, confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; relationships, working effectively with others, and leadership; resilience and determination; and other relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being.

Citizenship content will develop the capacity of the participant to make a positive contribution towards their participation in family, community and society. This will involve developing their knowledge and understanding of their role and developing capabilities for engagement with useful services; positive participation in community structures, initiatives and democratic processes; volunteering in communities of place and / or interest; positive family and community relations.

Result Indicators

Through these actions it was anticipated there would be a measurable increase in the percentage of 16-year-olds who:

- Socialise and/or play sport with people from a different religious community from a baseline of "very often" at 43% and "sometimes" at 24% to a target value of 50% and 28% respectively;

- Think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago from a baseline of 45% to a target value of 50%;

- Think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years-time from a baseline of 38% to a target value of 45%.

These result indicators were monitored from information collected by the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey and evaluated using the 2022 survey against baseline data gathered from the 2013 Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey.

Project Activity

To ensure that the design, duration, and intensity of PEACE4Youth would lead to a transformative experience, which both improves individual life circumstances and contributes to a more cohesive society, all funded projects and activities, were required to have the following essential features:

- Young-person-centred with an explicit learning and development focus;

- Professional youth development approach;

- Duration of 6-9 months with at least 3-4 days of participant contact per week;

- Focused development of participant capabilities aligned to all three programme outcome areas with the provision of opportunity for participants to achieve qualifications or accreditation in one or more of the outcome areas;

- Delivered on a cross-border and/or cross-community basis which will include group work as a core feature;

- Support for structured, individual action planning and one-to-one mentoring, and provision for mentoring support structures;

- Activities and supports designed to address barriers to participation;

- Activities designed to take cognisance of, and improve, mental wellbeing and other elements of participants' health as appropriate;

- Practitioner support initiatives and progression support structures and activities at the project level.

It was anticipated that all funded projects and activities would be tailored to the needs and interests of the participants with activities and methods underpinned by an agreed set of principles and practice standards.

A Stage 1 call for applicants for Specific Objective 2.1 was opened on the 3rd of December 2016 and closed on the 4th of January 2017. Applicants were asked to provide specific details in relation to each of the project selection criteria for the call including:

- Contribution to result and output indicators;
- Quality of the project design;
- Quality of cross-community and cross-border co-operation with demonstrable added value;
- Quality of the project team, partnership and implementation arrangements;
- Value for money.

The application process rolled out over two stages, where successful applicants at Stage 1 were asked to complete a business plan for review at Stage 2. Closing date for Stage 2 of the application process on the 12th of April 2017. Successful projects received notification in the late summer/early autumn of 2017 with project activities commencing immediately thereafter.

In total, eleven projects received funding through the PEACE4Youth Programme. Each project represented a collaboration of several different organisations, with one lead partner. Below is a list of all funded projects, their allotted budget, project duration, lead delivery agents, partnership organisations, and a short project summary as described by the projects.

Amplify (€4,568,998.60)
https://www.youthaction.org/amplify
Start/End Dates: 01/08/2017 to 30/06/2022
Lead Delivery Agent: YouthAction NI
Partner Organisations: Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, NI Youth Forum, Patrician Youth
Project Summary: The objective of AMPLIFY was to bring about transformational positive change to create stability and coping mechanisms for young people. It aimed to provide a "key" to unlock self-belief in which young people feel a sense of belonging and active contribution towards personal and societal change. Underpinned by respect for youth participation AMPLIFY aimed to nurture young people's active involvement within the programme design and further within civic society. AMPLIFY youth workers have inspired young people aged 14 – 24 years to form positive relationships with those from different backgrounds, gain qualifications and act for peace.

Breakthrough (€3,193,909.75)
https://www.ashtoncentre.com/services/youth-development/breakthrough-programme
Start/End Dates: 01/08/2017 to 30/04/2022
Lead Delivery Agent: Ashton Community Trust
Partner Organisations: StreetBeat Youth Project, Cliftonville Community Regeneration Forum, Loughview Community Action Partnership, Newtownabbey Arts & Cultural Network, Ardoyne Youth

Enterprises, Mount Vernon Community Development Forum, City Life Centre, Youth Education Health & Advice

Project Summary: Breathrough reports to use a holistic young person-centred approach, which aims to achieve sustainable, positive change enhancing young people's capacity to form positive relationships with people from a different background and make a positive contribution to society. The programme consisted of youth distinct strands: (1) school-based engagement with young people aged 14-17 years, (2) youth centre-based engagement with young people, in the evenings, aged 14-18 years, and (3) community-based engagement with young people aged 16-24 years. Young people taking part in the Breatkthrough Programme had the opportunity to get involved in team-building days, residentials, volunteering, one-to-one mentoring support and group work activities, including personal development, citizenship and good relations. In addition, young people also chose from a menu of training in the areas of Arts, Sports, Digital Imagin/Film Making, Music and Digitial Fabrication and showcased their amazing work.

Futures Project (€3,640,751)

https://www.belfastmet.ac.uk/support-for-business/belfast-business/Futures-Project/

Start/End Dates: 01/08/2017 to 30/04/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Belfast Metropolitican College

Partner Organisations: Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Start360, Southern Regional College

Project Summary: The project offered qualifications (OCN Level 2 Award in Personal Success and Well-being), residential trips, outdoor pursuits, volunteering opportunities, and a mentor for the duration of the programme. Young people also improved their confidence and self-esteem and developed leadership and teamwork skills. Futures enhanced the capacity of young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of different backgrounds and to make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society. Childcare, transport, and a free lunch were provided when required, as well as a financial incentive for those participating who were eligible.

Helping Equality Respecting Others Enabling Success (HEROES) (€1,785,364.44)

https://northernireland.mencap.org.uk/services-northern-ireland/heroes-youth-project

Start/End Dates: 01/07/2018 to 30/06/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Mencap NI

Partner Organisations: Londonderry YMCA, Devenish Partnership Forum, Health Service Executive

Project Summary: The HEROES project (Helping Equality, Respecting Others, Enabling Success) is an inclusive, cross-community, cross-border project that supports young people aged 14-24 years across Belfast, Fermanagh and Londonderry/Derry and the border counties of Ireland with and

without learning difficulties with personal development, citizenship and good relations. The project used a variety of programming activities to engage marginalised young people in a six-month non-formal, experiential learning programme. The broad range of activities included residentials and workshops, community-based projects and the opportunity to work towards both accredited and non-accredited qualifications.

Journeys (€5,074,283.26)

https://springboard-opps.org/projects/journeys/

Start/End Dates: 01/09/2017 to 30/03/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Springboard Opportunities

Partner Organisations: Roe Valley Residents Association, Cavan & Monaghan Education and Training Board, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Foras na Gaeilge, Ulster-Scots Agency, Belfast Central Mission, MACs Supporting Children & Young People, The Welcome Organisation, Queens University Belfast, Christian Brothers' School, Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast Model School for Girls, Belfast Boys Model School, Burnfoot Community Development Association, Benbradagh Community Association, Black Community Association, Greysteel Community Enterprise (Vale Centre), Teach na nDaoine Family Resource Centre, Belfast Area Partnership, Little Flower Girls School, St Patrick's College, Bearnageeha

Project Summary: The Journeys cross-community and cross-border based project used a variety of programming activities to engage marginalised young people aged 14-24 to develop soft skills and a respect for diversity. The project worked with young people from a range of backgrounds including NEET, Looked After Children (LAC), young offenders and those affected by paramilitary activity, mental health issues and addiction. Journeys also aimed to help build young people's capacity, promote mutual understanding, and increase citizenship. Throughout the 'Journey', participants-built understanding and explored diversity in a safe environment. Confidence was increased through tailored workshops and supportive mentoring. Young people also participated in 'giving back to the community through the design and delivery of social action projects. Project activities included thematic workshops, residentials and events, community-based projects and the provision of an accredited qualification – OCN Level II Good Relations / Diversity and Personal Success & Wellbeing.

Mpower (€3,541,772.95)

https://keep.eu/projects/19994/YMCA-M-Power-Meaningful-Cro-EN/

Lead Delivery Agent: YMCA Ireland

Partner Organisations: Southern Region YMCAs (Lurgan YMCA and Portadown YMCA), North Down YMCA, Youthbase YMCA Newcastle, Belfast YMCA, South East Antrim Region (Carrickfergus

YMCA and Larne YMCA), Londonderry YMCA, YMCA Lisburn Ltd, and Young Women's Christian Association - Monaghan Branch

Project Summary: The m-power project worked with young people aged 14-24 to deliver a relational, youth-focused programme to young people with deep social and emotional needs, at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour, violence or dissident activity and struggling with education, training or employment. m-power also worked with young people suffering or at risk of mental ill health, young people with physical disabilities and those with autism. Some beneficiaries were young people from ethnic minorities. The project will operate at YMCA centres in Belfast, Derry / Londonderry, East Antrim (Carrickfergus & Larne), Lisburn, Newcastle (Youth Base), North Down and Ards and Southern Region (Portadown & Lurgan). It will also operate at YWCA Monaghan. The project's main objective was to ensure young people form positive and effective relationships with others of different backgrounds and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society. Working with small groups, and building relationships of trust, allowed young people to co-create and co-manage the project and develop activities which the young people valued (for example outdoor pursuits, adventure pursuits, sports, leisure activities, arts, and music) in order to deliver the outcomes.

Peace Bytes (€3,795,063.93)

https://bytes.org/programmes/

Start/End Date: 01/08/2017 to 30/04/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Peace Bytes

Partner Organisations: TIDES Training, Moville and District Family Resource Centre, Newtownabbey Arts & Cultural Network

Project Summary: Peace Bytes provided a 30-week programme that combines tech, innovative youth work practices and one-to-one support to young people aged 14 – 24 in Northern Ireland and the cross-border region, including local communities in Newtownabbey, Derry/Londonderry and East Inishowen in Donegal with high levels of deprivation and who are influenced by paramilitaries and religious identity. Through both group work and mentoring, the project aimed to help young people overcome barriers to their potential, build their confidence and develop links with their peers from different backgrounds, in a safe and non-pressured environment. The use of technology-enhanced youth work methodologies created the opportunity for greater engagement with young people in a programme of learning focusing on good relations, personal development, and citizenship. The project aimed to build and embed the capacity of these marginalised young people as leaders, advocates and peacebuilders for cross-community and cross-border reconciliation, leaving a legacy. Childcare and transport were provided when required, as well as a financial incentive for participating to those who were eligible.

Strive (€3,979,785.60)

http://www.includeyouth.org/projects/strive

Start/End Date: 01/08/2017 to 30/04/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Include Youth

Partner Organisations: Youth Initiatives NI, Newstart Education Centre, Northern Ireland Alternatives, Lifford/Clonleigh Resource Centre

Project Summary: The Strive project delivered an intensive youth work programme for young people aged 14-24. The cross-community, cross-border programme focused on delivering good relations, citizenship and personal development to young people aged 14 to 24. The project featured young people who are 'Expert by Experience', having previously been involved in similar projects and will use their experience to lead on project design and delivery across the programme sites. Young people who joined the project were able to benefit from: one to one mentoring; group work/team building; meeting young people from other Strive sites; personal development sessions – big life issues; citizenship sessions – participation in the local community; good relations sessions – exploring and engaging other communities and cultures; opportunity to become a young leader – develop leadership skills; gaining OCN qualifications; and support to transition onto other areas.

The Third Space Project (€3,714,910)

https://www.extern.org/news/extern-and-verbal-celebrate-399m-peace-iv-funding-to-transform-the-lives-of-over-800-young-people-in-new-third-space-project

Start/End Dates: 01/08/2017 to 31/03/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Extern

Partner Organisations: The Verbal Arts Centre

Project Summary: The Third Space project worked with marginalised young people aged 14-24, from different communities, cultural, and religious backgrounds and operated across Northern Ireland, Cavan and Donegal. Third Space delivered a 26-week personalised self-development good relations and citizenship programme. Its objectives were to develop participants' capacity, to help lower levels of community division through personal development, to participate in purposeful learning and support, and to develop good relations and citizenship capabilities during periods of transition for the participants such as concluding formal education or leaving home. The project design engaged young people using a combined youth work/arts-based model within a resiliency-based framework to provide a transformative experience. A key focus of the project was to help highly vulnerable young people to reduce social isolation; develop a deeper sense of community awareness within their communities; and successfully negotiate and manage a programme of personal development for themselves, supported by qualified staff. Participants had the opportunity

to meet new people, take part in residentials, participate in shared reading experiences, acquire new skills in video production, and gain a qualification.

Transformation Education for Positive Relationships (TRANSFORM) (€2,390,685)

http://www.youthlink.org.uk/transform/

Start/End dates: 01/08/2017 to 28/02/2022

Lead Delivery Agent: Youth Link NI

Partner Organisations: Youth Initiatives NI, Royal MENCAP

Project Summary: The Transformative Education for Positive Relationships Project (TEPRP), more commonly known as TRANSFORM, sought to engage with young people aged 14-24 from Protestant, Catholic and minority groups to participate in youth work programmes to explore the themes of Personal Development, Good Relations and Active Citizenship. Geographic areas targeted included Antrim, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone; Derry/Londonderry, Armagh, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth and Donegal. The project was delivered through a youth work approach using non-formal learning environments supporting young people to fulfil their potential, develop skills, confidence, gain OCN qualifications and contribute positively as active citizens in their communities. Participants gained volunteering experience, participated in a sporting event from a tradition different from their own, and participated in a cultural/arts event tackling issues of sectarianism, racism and discrimination.

YouthScape (€3,994,559.07)

https://swc.ac.uk/news/youthscape-a-peace-iv-programme-transforming-lives

Start/End Dates: 01/11/2017 to 31/12/2021

Lead Delivery Agent: South West College

Partner Organisations: Donegal Youth Services, TIDES Training

Project Summary: The Youthscape programme was a cross-border, cross-community intervention programme. It operated in Counties Tyrone, Fermanagh, and Donegal covering the 5 areas of Omagh, Enniskillen, Dungannon, Ballybofey, and Letterkenny and delivered a proactive, youth-focused programme to 800 marginalised young people. The Youthscape programme focused on a 'co-design' and 'person-centred' approach to learning and development; providing participants with the opportunity to input into and form the structure and make-up of the programme. As the programme progressed, participants had the opportunity to become Peace Apprentices and to join The Youthscape Youth Forum. Participating in the 6-month programme enabled them to set personal goals, socialise with peers from different communities, and receive tailored support to address their barriers.

Quality and Impact Body

To ensure that the impact of the Programme was maximised, all funded projects received guidance and support through a Quality and Impact Body (QIB) which worked closely with the SEUPB and reported to an interdepartmental committee established to oversee the implementation of the Programme. The QIB was tasked with developing a strong, nurturing relationship with all projects through centralised activities and events, structured project visits, and ongoing quality and impact conversations. To this end, the QIB was responsible for,

- Encouraging a change and outcomes focus in the design and implementation of all funded projects;
- Developing a learning culture within the Programme such that knowledge and best practice is shared within and between funded projects;
- Delivering support to practitioners within and across projects to enhance the youth development approach and the achievement of impact, as well as providing opportunities for focused reflective practice, general advice, and assisting projects to make links with external support where necessary;
- Advising and providing more general impact guidance around participant recruitment, development and implementation of project monitoring systems and distance travelled measurement, project-level theories of change, supporting quality and consistency in participant outcome progress monitoring, supporting the development of projects' individual participant development planning processes, and supporting the development and implementation of procedures and processes for data collection;
- Supporting the development of robust quality assurances processes across Programme-funded activities;
- Provision of advice and guidance on post-project opportunities for Programme participants and specialist support services where necessary.

A Stage 1 call for applications for the appointment of a Quality and Impact Body under Specific Objective 2.1: Children & Young People was opened on the 3rd of December 2016 and closed on the 4th of January 2017. Applicants were asked to provide specific details in relation to each of the project selection criteria for the call including:

- Contribution to result and output indicators;
- Quality of the project design;
- Quality of cross-community and cross-border co-operation with demonstrable added value;
- Quality of the project team, partnership and implementation arrangements;
- Value for money;

- Contribution towards sustainable development;
- Contribution towards equality.

Similar to the funded projects, the application process rolled out over two stages, where successful applicants at Stage 1 were asked to complete a business plan at Stage 2. The closing date for Stage 2 of the application process was on the 12th of April 2017. Successful projects received notification in the late summer/early autumn of 2017 with project activity commencing thereafter.

Led by Cooperation Ireland in collaboration with Ulster University, National Youth Council of Ireland, and POBAL, **YouthPact** was awarded €1,407,852.69 through the PEACE4Youth Programme to act as the Quality and Impact Body for both Phase I and Phase II of the Programme (see https://cooperationireland.org/projects/youthpact/). As described by YouthPact, as a Quality and Impact Body, they offered training to youth workers to improve their peace-building work with young people, with a focus on key themes which feature across all projects including:

- Good relations and peace-building;
- Facilitating growth for and with young people;
- Engagement with hard-to-reach groups;
- What is youth work?
- Citizenship and building social activism.

YouthPact reported that their aim was to support the work and workers in the Peace4Youth programme, which ran peacebuilding programmes for young people aged 14-24 across Northern Ireland and the border regions. The project aimed to provide this role through a range of activities including learning and best practice events e.g., training for youth workers to improve their peace-building work, young voice events that capture young participants' views on issues, guidance, and resources e.g., toolkits, online youth work materials and Policy Papers, as well as progression advice on further programmes or opportunities that participants could join after their project ends. This allowed them to ensure the quality of the delivery projects and to maximise the impact of their projects.

Programme Evaluation

To ensure that PEACE4Youth Programme met the requirements established through the Programme-level theory of change, all funded projects were assessed using quality distance-travelled measurements and project self-evaluation techniques aligned to the Programme-level theory of change and evaluation framework. In addition, an Evaluation Plan was developed which

outlined two types of evaluation; the first, evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation mechanism established for the Programme and the second, evaluating the intervention logic of the three outcome areas.

The successful applicant completing the latter **impact evaluation** was required to:
- Complete a Project Initiation Document within one month of appointment;
- Carry out a longitudinal Impact Evaluation for Specific Objective 2.1, to include a report on Phase I in 2018 (October) and 2020 (October), and a final report in early 2022;
- Attend meetings of the PEACE Programme Monitoring Committee to report on progress and present on findings of reports when required;
- Attend meetings of the Evaluation Steering Group to report on progress and findings as required;
- Develop a programme for, and play an active role in, two conferences on Children and Young People (14-24) to be held in 2019, and should Phase II proceed in 2022;
- Attend other Special EU Programmes Body meetings/events as may be required.

More specifically, the impact evaluation was designed to test the intervention logic, and form a view of the effectiveness and impact of the investment. Achievement was assessed in terms of:
- **Effectiveness:** the attainment of the Specific Objective set and the intended results;
- **Efficiency:** the relationship between the funding disbursed and the results achieved;
- **Impact:** the contribution of the programme to the end-objectives of the EU Cohesion Policy.

A call for applicants for Specific Objective 2.1 was opened in the summer of 2017 and closed on the 30th of August 2017. Applicants were asked to provide specific details in relation to each of the project selection criteria for the call including:
- Quality of appropriate methodology;
- Quality of the project team, partnership and implementation arrangements;
- Value for money.

In November of 2017, the evaluating team from the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations at Queen's University, Belfast was contracted to complete the latter **impact evaluation** of PEACE4Youth. To date, the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations evaluation team has delivered on the Project Initiation Document, the Phase I Impact Evaluation Report in coordination with RSM UK, the PEACE IV Impact Evaluation Conference 2019, and the Phase II Impact Evaluation Report. The current document, the PEACE4Youth Impact Evaluation Final Report, builds

upon and extends their insights, but acts as a standalone document evaluating the overall Programme from start to completion.

PART II: Approach

CHAPTER 2: Evaluation Approach

To evaluate the intervention logic, effectiveness, and impact of the investment in the PEACE4Youth Programme, the evaluation team used multiple methods. Our approach examined both primary data (longitudinal surveys with participants and focus groups with key project personnel) and secondary data from SEUPB and the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey. Together these sources of data allow for the exploration of both individual- and project-level factors that may influence Programme impact. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately using appropriate analytic techniques, while insights gleaned from one analysis informed the analysis of the other. This strategy enabled clear identification of potential success on output indicators, outcome areas and their indicators, and result indicators, as well as identification of aspects of the implementation approach that may influence project delivery.

Evaluating the Theory of Change

Output Indicators

Data obtained from SEUPB provided evidence for whether the target number of 7,400 participants completed approved projects across the two phases of the Programme.

Outcome Indicators

To determine the distance travelled on each of the three outcome areas and their indicators, quantitative data were collected through participant surveys, completed by the young people participating in funded projects at multiple time points, including: pre-intervention (Time 1), mid-intervention (Time 2), post-intervention (Time 3), and at 12-month post-intervention (monitoring survey). This longitudinal approach, with the collection of survey data from multiple time points allows for evaluating within-person change ('distance travelled'), as well as between-person differences (as measured through demographic information). The addition of a 12-month post-intervention survey monitors for 'lasting effects' after the formal intervention has ended.

Each funded project was bespoke with some projects running project activities for 6 months and others for 9 months, and various cohorts within each project running simultaneously; therefore, data collection for participant surveys were tailored to the project's unique timeline (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Example of Bespoke Timeline

Survey	Collection Date (6-month)	Collection Date (9-month)
Pre-intervention (Time 1)	February 2018	October 2020
Mid-intervention (Time 2)	End of April/early May 2018	Mid-Jan/end of Jan 2021
Post-intervention (Time 3)	End of July/early Aug 2018	End of May/early June 2021
Follow up (Monitoring survey)	August 2019	June 2022

Once consent was gained from the project, participants were contacted for recruitment. A small packet was provided to youth workers to pass along to the young people that contained an information letter explaining the details of the evaluation, what participation entailed and a consent form for them to read and sign. For those under the age of 16, packets included a second information letter and consent form for their parent/caregiver to read and sign. Data were not collected from those who had not signed a consent form.

Participant profiles (Phase I) and surveys were offered in both electronic and paper formats to best suit the resources of the funded project and for ease of data collection. To ensure confidentiality, those projects completing paper surveys were asked to enter the paper survey into the online site and then asked to shred the original document. Some projects chose to mail the completed surveys to the evaluation team as they were either unable to properly shred the documents or felt uncomfortable completing the data entry. This procedure was used for each subsequent wave of data collection. Participant profiles and each subsequent survey were matched through an identification code assigned to each participant. For Phase I, in Northern Ireland, the young person's Unique Learner Number served as their identification code and in the Republic of Ireland, a bespoke code created by the funded projects was used.

The evaluation team used a 'repeated measures' approach to assess the distance travelled in the core outcome areas for young people from the beginning to the midpoint, and to the end of their involvement with the projects. In addition, the sample size allowed for the completion of subgroup analyses (i.e., results broken down by key categories or demographic information).

Statistical significance was determined through repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the overall dataset, and through mixed ANOVA for the sub-groups. Because the time points between the surveys varied for each participant (some participants were in a project for longer than other participants), a second series of analyses used statistical regression to control for the length of time (i.e., how long participants were in the programme). This second approach provides evidence

for whether an observed effect could vary according to how long a young person participated in a project.

Result Indicators

The Programme-level theory of change anticipated that through the outputs and outcome areas there would be a measurable increase in the percentage of 16-year-olds who socialise and/or play sport with people from a different religious community, think relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago, and think relations between Protestants and Catholics will be better in five years-time.

To explore potential change at the societal level, baseline data were gathered from the 2013 Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey and were evaluated using the 2022 survey. Additionally, analysis of the participant survey explored potential changes in the result indicators based upon direct participation in project activities.

Examining Contextual Factors

Project Activity

To explore the internal and external factors which may have impacted the quality of project activity, a series of focus groups were conducted with youth workers working on each of the funded projects. Focus groups provide an ideal methodology from which to gather data by facilitating dynamic interactions among and between members of the group. As each member is stimulated by and reacts to the discussions of another, this can lead to a synergistic group effect (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014; Sussman et al., 1991) where a plethora of topics and ideas can be generated. The flow of ideas and information is thus enhanced by listening to each other's experiences and interactions. Additionally, the informal nature of focus group discussion is ideal for fostering an atmosphere to encourage participants to speak freely and openly.

To ensure that the evaluation obtained wide-ranging and valid responses from potential focus group participants, the evaluation team worked with the Quality and Impact Body to create an email list of youth workers employed on each of the funded projects. These individuals were emailed directly with information regarding the details of the focus groups and a reminder that they were under no obligation to participate. Due to the nature of the evaluation, it was possible that some of the data gathered in the focus groups would be critical of PEACE4Youth and its associated bodies; therefore, participants were reminded that the organisation had clearly expressed a desire for accurate information on the challenges and difficulties they are facing. They were assured that all data would

be anonymous, and they would not face repercussions if they expressed opinions that were of a critical nature. A thematic analysis of the focus group data was employed because it is flexible and bottom-up. Thematic analysis also allows the core topics to emerge inductively from the data themselves. All focus groups were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and indexed. The sections relevant to the evaluation were identified and analysed following the guidelines set out by Braun and Clark (2006).

First, data were read and reread by the evaluation team with key segments identified and descriptive categories developed based upon common features using open coding (Charmaz, 1995). This process was facilitated with the use of memo-writing and consensus building between members of the research team in a method of open-coding. Next, sub-categories and higher-order categories were identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process was facilitated by a comparison of both positive and negative examples found within the data, and this led to a taxonomy of response types across the data. Finally, theoretical saturation occurred when no new data emerged for the categories and the categories were dense enough to cover all variations and relationships (Willig, 2001).

Quality and Impact Body

To assess the impact that the Quality and Impact Body had upon the delivery of required project activity, questions regarding the role and value of YouthPact were included in all three series of the key project personnel focus groups. Further, subsequent data were gathered by reviewing the meetings, training, and resources provided to the project management team and project personnel.

Collaborative Approach

Training and Capacity Building

As an evaluation team, we believed that it was critical to work in collaboration with the projects across the course of the evaluation. It was our explicit goal to develop an open line of communication with the youth workers and project coordinators so that they were fully on board with our approach, but also so that we could feedback early findings to the projects to inform their subsequent delivery.

All funded projects were recruited at the start of Phase I to take part in the evaluation. Therefore, we reached out to the funded projects by sending a letter introducing the evaluation team, detailing the aims of the evaluation, and outlining the process and procedures that would be used moving forward. Those consenting to participate in the evaluation were invited to attend one of two seminars produced by the evaluation team along with the Quality and Impact Body. The aim of the seminar

was to ensure that project personnel had an opportunity to personally meet members of the evaluation team, have a clear understanding of the aims and procedures of the evaluation, and, because they would be asked to monitor participant data collection, to feel properly equipped and supported to collect robust data. Similarly, the seminar offered an opportunity for the project personnel to introduce the evaluation team to the unique issues and social context that shaped each project.

The in-person seminar included two parts. The first half of the seminar was an opportunity for members of the evaluation team to describe in greater detail the rationale behind the evaluation, the methodological approaches, and the project's role. This included a lengthy question and answer period so that project personnel had a chance to ask any questions they may have had. The second half of the seminar focused on capacity building, as participant surveys would be administered and collected by project personnel, often by individuals who had limited evaluation or research experience. Along with the Quality and Impact Body, the evaluation team provided practical guidance, including a detailed discussion on ethical procedures and data collection best practices.

Having the active involvement and support of project personnel was essential and the seminar provided a key setting for engaging them as partners in the evaluation process. Following the seminars, the evaluation team worked closely with the Quality and Impact Body to keep an open line of communication with project personnel and to provide on-going support throughout the evaluation. Over the course of the evaluation, time and space were provided for clarification and discussion of evaluation findings and how they may impact project activity. Further, additional funding was secured to develop a Youth Advisory Forum to refine the Phase II surveys and for the lead Post-Doctoral Research Fellow from the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations Evaluations team to be seconded to SEUPB to analyse Phase I and Phase II data. As a result, the collaborative relationship that was developed has led to stronger methodological tools, analytic investigations, and project activities.

CHAPTER 3: Assessing Outcome Areas and their Indicators

In this chapter we will review, in greater depth, the assessment tools. The surveys contained established scales and questionnaires specifically tailored to assess the impact evaluation to assess the three Programme outcome areas and their indicators, at key moments in the project delivery.

Phase I (2017 – 2018) Participant Survey

We detail here the specific scales and questionnaires used in Phase I surveys, organised by each of the three core Programme outcome areas and their indicators[2]. We highlight the validity and reliability of the chosen questionnaires. More specifically, the chosen scales were appropriate for test-retest over the course of the evaluation; had been validated with similar aged-samples; and, when possible, had been tested within the Northern Ireland context.

Good Relations

It was anticipated that positive changes in the good relations indicators would contribute to lower levels of community division, sectarianism and racism, and would make a positive contribution to reconciliation. Individual indicators include:

Understanding of and respect for diversity. An overall attitude towards diversity was measured using the respect for diversity scale (Burns, 2013). The full scale includes 18 statements from four different subscales which young people were asked to rate the extent to which the statement is like them or how much they agree with it using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale showed strong reliability (α = .91[3]).

Awareness of and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others. Subscale 1 from the respect for diversity scale specifically measuring curiosity and learning was used to form an understanding of a young person's awareness and sensitivity towards others (5-items; Burns, 2013). The subscale showed strong internal reliability (α = .81).

Understanding of their own identity. Two scales were used to measure an understanding of participants' own identity. First, a community background identity strength scale (Hughes et al., 2013) assessed strength of the participant's identification with their community background. Participants

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[2] Unless otherwise noted, items within each scales were averaged to form a composite measure.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, scale reliability is measured as the Cronbach's alpha for the Time 1 survey.

responded with the extent to which they agreed on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree) with two items that assessed how positive their identity makes them feel and the centrality of the identity to their sense of self. Second, the perceived family ethnic socialisation measure (Umaña-Taylor, 2001; Umaña-Taylor, Zeiders, & Updegraff, 2013; Taylor & McKeown, 2019) was also used to capture the extent to which knowledge, customs, and cultural values are taught within the family. The scale includes 6 statements to which participants rated the extent to which they agreed along a 7-point Likert scale (Not at all - Very much). The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .81).

Respect for others from different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations. Two subscales from the respect for diversity scale (Burns, 2013) were used to explore general respect for others from a different community: fair and equal treatment of others, and affect towards self and others. Both subscales showed strong internal reliability (α = .83, α = .71 respectively). Subsequent analyses using Time 1 data found that one item within the scale was particularly poor; as such, this item was removed from the scale for Time 2 and 3.

Positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background (other community specific). Four different scales were used to capture an understanding of participant's self-reported positive predisposition towards members of the other community along attitudinal, affective, relational, and behavioural dimensions. This included a measure of outgroup attitudes using a feeling thermometer (Cairns, Kenworthy, Campbell, & Hewstone, 2006) in which participants are asked to report how positive they feel towards members of the other community on a scale of 0 to 100. A second measure explored how anxious participants reported they were when they interacted with an individual from the other community (Hughes et al., 2013). Specifically, participants were asked to think of a situation in which they would meet a young person from the other community and report how nervous and how uncomfortable they would feel (α = .79). The quantity and closeness of cross-group friendships young people reported with members of the other community were also used as a measure of positive predispositions towards others (Bagci, et al., 2014; Cameron, Bagci, Morais, & Turner, 2017). Finally, reported prosocial behaviours towards the outgroup was used to assess the behavioural dimension of positive predispositions towards others (Taylor, Merrilees, Goeke-Morey, Shirlow, Cairns, & Cummings, 2014). Participants were first asked to indicate the extent to which they displayed prosocial behaviours in general, and then asked the extent to which they behaved this way towards young people from the other community. The 7-item scale of prosocial behaviours was measured along a 7-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Strongly Agree) and showed strong internal reliability (α = .94).

Positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background (cross-border specific). The intergroup anxiety measure, as well as the friendship quantity and closeness items discussed above were adapted to assess positive predisposition specifically related to cross-border relationships. The intergroup anxiety measure showed strong internal reliability (α = .89).

Positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background (minority ethnic background specific). Attitudes, behaviours, and affective reactions towards young people from a minority ethnic background was determined using three separate items. Young people were asked, how often they spent their free time with young people from a minority ethnic background (Never – Very Often), how happy they were when they spent time with them (Very Unhappy – Very Happy), and in general how positive or negative they felt towards young people from a minority ethnic background (Very Negative – Very Positive). Each item was measured along a 5-point Likert scale.

Personal Development

Positive changes in personal development indicators were anticipated to develop the social and emotional or 'soft' skills of the participant. Individual indicators included:

Self-awareness / understanding. A sense of self-awareness and understanding was measured using three items from the self-acceptance subscale of Ryff & Keyes' (1995) scale of psychological well-being. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they disagreed or agreed using a 6-point Likert scale. The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .70).

Confidence. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1979) was used to measure participant's self-report confidence levels. This scale includes a series of 10 statements; participants are asked to report the extent to which they agreed or disagreed along a 4-point Likert scale. The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .85). Discussions from youth workers, however, indicated that negatively worded items within the scale were particularly triggering for young people (e.g., "At times I think I am no good at all"); as such, the four negatively phrased items were removed from the scale for Time 2 and 3.

Agency. Self-reported agency was measured using the short form of the general self-efficacy scale (GSE-6; Romppel et al., 2013). Participants were asked to determine the extent to which 6 statements were not at all true to exactly true of them using a 4-point Likert scale. These items were averaged together to form a composite, showing a strong internal reliability (α = .76). Subsequent analyses using Time 1 data found that one item within the scale was particularly poor; as such, this item was removed from the scale for Time 2 and 3. In addition, a second measure of agency related

to agency within the young person's neighbourhood and society more generally was included. These items were drawn from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.

Planning and problem solving. The environmental mastery subscale of Ryff & Keyes' (1995) scale of psychological well-being was used to measure planning and problem solving. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed / disagreed with three items measured with a 6-point Likert scale. The scale showed an adequate internal reliability ($\alpha = .54$).

Positive relationships / working effectively with others. The subscale of Ryff & Keyes' (1995) scale of psychological well-being related to positive relations with others was used to measure positive relationships / working effectively with others. This included three items measured on a 6-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Strongly Agree). The scale showed poor internal reliability ($\alpha = .48$). Subsequent analyses using Time 1 data found that one item within the scale was particularly poor; as such, this item was removed from the scale for Time 2 and 3.

Leadership. General leadership skills were measured by asking participants the extent to which they agreed with six statements measured on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree). The leadership skills scale (Chell & Athayde, 2009) showed strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .85$).

Resilience and determination. Participant's self-reported resilience was measured using the CYRM-12 (Liebenberg, Ungar, & LeBlanc, 2013). Participants were asked the extent to which 11 statements described them on a 5-point Likert scale (Does Not Describe Me At All, Describes Me A Lot). The scale showed strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .88$).

Relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being. To ascertain young people's knowledge and skills for supporting their health and well-being, a general help seeking skills questionnaire which asked participants how likely it was on an 8-point Likert scale (Extremely Unlikely, Extremely Likely) that they would seek help from 11 different individuals (friend, parent, relative, mental health professional, phone help line, GP, teacher, pastor/priest, youth worker, other). The scale showed strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .79$).

Citizenship

Through a greater development of citizenship skills, it was hypothesised that participants would develop the capacity to make a positive contribution towards their participation in family, community

and society. This would involve developing their knowledge and understanding of their role and developing capabilities for the following indicators:

Engagement with useful services. Participants were asked to indicate on a 7-point Likert scale how often (Never, Very Often) they had engaged in 8 different civic activities in the past year (Taylor, Townsend, Merrilees, Goeke-Morey, Shirlow, & Cummings, 2017). The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .88).

Positive participation in community structures, initiatives and democratic processes. To capture such a complex psychological process, three different scales were used. The first, included the above-mentioned civic engagement scale. The second, a scale measuring support for peacebuilding (McKeown & Taylor, 2017). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with 7 statements related to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland (Strongly Disagree, Strongly Agree). The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .88). And the third, measuring youth participation in sectarian antisocial behaviour (Goeke-Morey, Cummings, Ellis, Merrilees, Schermerhorn, & Shirlow, 2009). Participants were asked to read through a list of four different behaviours and asked whether or not, and how often, they had engaged in them to "get at" someone from the other community in the past three months. These behaviours included flag flying, the wearing of football jerseys, singing or chanting of songs, and teasing or taunting someone from the other community through various means. The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .87).

Volunteering in communities of place and / or interest. The civic engagement scale discussed above was used to measure the degree to which young people had volunteered within their communities.

Positive family relations. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed (6-point Likert scale strongly disagree, strongly agree) with a series of 5 items drawn from the Bloom (1985) family functioning scale. The scale showed strong internal reliability (α = .76). Young people who indicated that they had ever lived in a residential home, hostel, or lived with a foster parent did not complete this scale.

Positive community relations. Two scales were used to explore the young person's attitudes towards community relations. The first, the above-mentioned youth participation in sectarian antisocial behaviour (Goeke-Morey, Cummings, Ellis, Merrilees, Schermerhorn, & Shirlow, 2009). The second, prosocial behaviours towards members of the ingroup (ladd & Profilet, 1996; Taylor, Merrilees, Goeke-Morey, Shirlow, Cairns, & Cummings, 2014). Participants were first asked to

indicate the extent to which they displayed prosocial behaviours in general, and then asked the extent to which they behaved this way towards young people from their own community. The 7-item scale of prosocial behaviours was measured along a 7-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Strongly Agree) and showed strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .94$).

Additional Indicators of Interest

At Time 3, two questions were added following the advice of key stakeholders around accreditation due to participation in PEACE4Youth and next steps.

First participants indicated the accreditations they had received by the end of their PEACE4Youth projects, including the following options:

- Qualification in a personal development area (e.g., confidence, healthy living, drugs awareness, financial planning)
- Qualification in a good relations area (e.g., conflict resolution, diversity awareness)
- Qualification in a citizenship area (e.g., volunteering, peer mentoring, community development)
- Essential skills
- Health & safety/first aid
- Other qualifications
- None
- I don't know

Second, participants indicated what they would be doing once they finished their PEACE4Youth project, including the following options:

- Another youth project/community project
- Voluntary work/volunteering
- Paid work (part-time or full-time)
- Accredited training (e.g., OCN certificate)
- Job training, an apprenticeship, or an internship
- Education (GCSEs)
- Education (AS or A Levels)
- Further Education College course
- Other College or University (part-time or full-time course)
- I don't plan to do anything
- I'm not sure yet

Participant Profiles

Along with the Phase I surveys, young people were asked to complete a participant profile, or short, demographic questionnaire including, gender, age, community background, jurisdiction, disability status, and carer status.

Phase II (2019 -2022) Participant Surveys

Based upon the findings from the longitudinal surveys and insights drawn from focus groups with youth workers following Phase I, a series of recommendations were made for the overall Programme moving forward to Phase II. The evaluation team suggested that as Phase II commenced, it was an appropriate time to re-evaluate the methodological approach in an effort to ensure more reliable and valid measurements, streamline the data collection process, and develop more user-friendly surveys. This included several alterations to the longitudinal surveys in terms of language, measures, length, and format. Specifically, the development of new scales to measure various output indicators; more appropriate surveys for young people with learning difficulties, those for whom English was a second language, and for early leavers; and a new matching mechanism to overcome the challenges associated with the use of the Unique Learner Numbers.

Scale Reductions

Analyses of the Phase I data revealed that a select number of scales showed a significantly high correlations indicating that there was relatively little difference between what the differing scales were measuring. For example, environmental mastery showed significantly high correlation with our measure of self-efficacy and resilience. This indicated that the way we were measuring the outcome indicator "planning and problem solving" was not appropriate. This was also true for the self-acceptance scale which showed significantly high correlations with the measure of self-efficacy and resilience; indicating that our measure of the outcome indicator for "self-awareness and understanding" was not appropriate. Upon additional scrutiny of the items used to explore awareness and understanding of one's own community it was decided that the scale used was too blunt of a measurement and did not fully capture the complexity of the psychological construct under investigation. Additionally, youth workers reported to the evaluation team young people struggled with the overall length and language within the survey. While the majority of scales within the survey had been used with young people of a similar age in Northern Ireland, not all of the scales had not been tested with this unique target group.

To address these concerns, the evaluation team scrutinised the original instruments used during Phase I; particular attention was paid to the instructions provided and scales used to measure the

various outcome indicators on the various quantitative surveys completed by the young people. As a result, for Phase II new scales for those measures that were inappropriate were developed, the language on instructions and items were adapted so that they were more user-friendly, and items from scales that were either redundant or did not add to the reliability and internal validity of the scale were removed to shorten the overall length of the surveys.

Removal of Redundant or Irrelevant Items

To meet practical limitations on available time and resources, the use of shortened tests is a popular strategy with researchers (e.g., Burish, 1997; Shrout & Yager, 1989; Stanton, Sinar, Balzer, & Smith, 2002). However, it is critical when removing items from a psychometrically validated scale, that the researcher is careful to maintain a tool that is both reliable and valid with items that provide sufficient construct coverage. There are several strategies that can be employed separately or in combination when removing items from scales. The three most prominent include a *statistics-driven strategies* where factor analyses to evaluate the internal structure of a test and select items with the highest factor loadings and remove items that have cross-loadings or particularly low factor loadings; a *judgemental strategy* in which items are selected for removal based upon the expert judgement of the research team, including how well the item covers the construct of interest, the appropriateness of the content of the item (e.g., relevance to target group, language use); and finally, an *ad hoc strategy* in which even vs uneven numbered items are removed, or negatively vs positively worded items (Coste, Guillemin, Pouchot, & Fermanian, 1997; Stanton et al., 2002).

While analytically rigorous, the use of a statistics-driven strategy in isolation is potentially vulnerable to the removal of items that can lead to insufficient coverage of the construct, as the strategy is "blind" to item content. As such, several authors recommend the combination of statistics-driven and a judgmental approach (Coste et al. 1997; Smith et al., 2000). This was the strategy taken by the evaluation team to evaluate scales and remove items where appropriate[4] from the following measures:

- Self-esteem
- Help-seeking skills
- Resilience
- Leadership skills
- Respect for diversity

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[4] A full discussion of the statistical analyses conducted to remove items is not included in the current chapter. For additional information on the statistical strategy employed by the evaluation team, please contact Dr Danielle Blaylock at d.blaylock@qub.ac.uk.

- Planning and problem solving

Youth Advisory Forum

Drawing on children's rights-based approach to research, the development of new measures and the adaptation of existing measures and instruments was completed in collaboration with young people. The inclusion of youth advisors or peer researchers in studies involving children and young people is an increasingly common practice. Children are recognised as social actors in their own right, capable of presenting valid opinions on the way their lives have been, and are, unfolding. There is now a pragmatic interest among researchers to develop appropriate methods to access those voices. Whilst young people as advisors is relatively low on the 'ladder of participation' (child-led research being at the top – see Hart & UICD Center, 1992), young people can be meaningfully involved in advising on substantive issues associated with research, such as the development of research questions, design of research instruments, analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of results (Burns & Schubotz, 2009).

Young researchers are more likely than adult researchers to share common experiences and a "common language" with young research participants, including local shared meanings and references associated with words, which is seen as one of the main benefits of participatory research with children and young people (Kirby, 1999). For youth advisors or peer researchers themselves, one of the main benefits is the potential emancipatory biographical effect that the project can have. This can be for both the community and individual level (Kirby, Laws, & Pettitt, 2004). Children and young people may have the opportunity to be involved in local authorities' decision-making processes or to participate more in civil society and become more critically aware of their community and its structure (Kirby, 1999). Young people can also benefit from becoming peer researchers in terms of their personal development. Their confidence and sense of self-worth may increase, and they can develop their analytical, communication, and teamwork skills as well as gain knowledge of research methodology, community issues, and policy processes, which can transfer to other settings (McLaughlin, 2005).

As such, the evaluation team won a small amount of external funding[5] to create a Youth Advisory Forum to adapt the evaluation surveys. The Youth Advisory Forum was comprised of a group of 9 young people who were previous participants in PEACE4Youth projects themselves and had shared characteristics of the current participants in the programme (i.e., at-risk youth; living in areas that

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[5] American Psychological Association Division 48: Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence Small Grants Program for Peace Psychology Research, Education, or Community Projects ($600).

were most affected by the Northern Irish conflict). The young people were not research participants. Instead, they were an expert group invited to contribute to the evaluation in relation to young people's views on the issues and indicators under investigation.

The Forum met two times with Dr Stephanie Burns. The first meeting included an introductory and 'capacity-building' workshop to: give background information on the PEACE4Youth Programme and the evaluation; set up the aims of the Forum and answer questions; as well as discuss the results of the Phase I evaluation and their understandings of the 18 outcome indicators of the survey. Whereas the second meeting included a workshop to collate the young people's recommendations for the second phase of the evaluation concerning the (re)design of the survey and topics for focus groups.

The benefits for the young people who took part in the Youth Advisory Forum were four-fold. First, they had an opportunity to express their views in a respectful space without fear of rebuke or reprisal. Second, they had an opportunity to build their capacity in understanding the peace-building indicators under investigation. Third, they gained knowledge of evaluation and research methodologies and exercised their right to inform best practice in policy and community-based services that impact them. Finally, they became more aware of the duty-bearers in their community (those who have a responsibility for acting on research findings).

In collaboration with the Youth Advisory Forum, new measures were created for the following outcome indicators:
- Agency (self-efficacy)
- Agency (empowerment in own community)
- Positive relationships
- Awareness of the beliefs of others
- Understanding of own identity
- Cross-group friendships (future behavioural intentions)
- Positive community relations
- Participation in antisocial behaviour in own community

The young people also felt that items needed to be added to the civic engagement measure to grasp the construct more effectively. As such, two items were added to each of the three subscales (volunteering, participation in democratic processes, and engagement with useful services). In addition, the following measures were adapted to include more appropriate and young person friendly language:
- Self-awareness and understanding

- Self-confidence
- Contact quantity and quality with various groups
- Intergroup attitudes
- Civic engagement
- Demographics

Creation of Additional Survey Formats

Illustrated Survey

Midway through Phase I, discussions began with MENCAP staff from the Heroes and TRANSFORM projects about the creation of a shortened survey for young people who had learning difficulties. The evaluation team first met with staff to discuss their concerns and to hear about the challenges that young people were having when completing the core version of the survey. Working from this meeting, a first draft was developed in the summer of 2018 which was sent to the MENCAP team for initial comments on the length, wording and design of the survey.

Following the Phase I evaluation results in October 2018 and the statistical assessment of which scales and items could be removed or shortened, the draft underwent further changes. As such, a second draft was then circulated to staff in December 2018, which included demographics and one item to measure each of the 18 sub-indicators needed for the valuation. The choice of which item to include from the scales used in the core survey was mainly based on a 'factor analysis' statistical assessment, which can give an indication of which questions most accurately capture the concept that is being measured. To test the validity and user-friendliness of the survey, this draft was piloted with several participants. Feedback indicated that the survey still required staff support to complete it, but that it was much improved and was suitable to be rolled out. Participants began to complete this version of the survey from February 2019.

Arabic Language Survey

During the programme staff focus groups carried out in July 2019, one issue raised was the difficulty that some young people, particularly those who are refugees or asylum seekers from Arabic-speaking nations, have with understanding the language in the survey. Project staff asked if the text-light, illustrated version of the survey could be used with these young people, or if that text-light version of the survey could be translated into Arabic for them. In September 2019, the illustrated survey and accompanying consent and information forms were translated and back-translated by an Arabic-speaking doctorate student in the School of Psychology. This student was experienced working with the translation of survey materials from English to Arabic. The new Arabic language survey was circulated for use in October 2019.

Early Exit Survey

An 'early exit' survey for young people who were leaving PEACE4Youth projects was first developed in December 2018 to enable the measurement of distance-travelled and qualifications achieved by this group of young people during their time in the programme, as well as to gather information on the destinations they were going to/their plans upon leaving. Given that this survey was the same length as a regular Time 3 (end-of-project) survey, however, the feedback received was that young people who had disengaged from or were in the process of disengaging from projects did not want to complete it. As such, in May 2019, the survey was shortened to include only tick-box questions about qualifications achieved and destinations after PEACE4Youth projects, as well as a Likert-scale question about their enjoyment of the programme and an open-ended question about the main reason why they were leaving early.

Matching Mechanisms

During Phase I, to match surveys between the various time points, it was recommended to the evaluation team that young people use their Unique Learning Numbers (ULN). The ULN is a 10-digit reference number used to access the Personal Learning Record of anyone over the age of 13 involved in UK education or training. By asking the young people to provide their ULN, the surveys would have a way to match the surveys between the various time points and to link the survey data to the young person's learning achievements and verified qualifications (e.g., GCSEs, A levels, work-based learning etc.).

Unfortunately, the use of ULNs was a significant challenge for both the evaluation team and practitioners during Phase I. Youth workers expressed considerable difficulty obtaining ULNs for their young people and often did not have a ULN for them when they went to complete the participant profile and the Time 1 (and sometimes Time 2) survey. To address this problem, some youth workers created a unique identification code for their young people. In theory this should not be a problem, however, it proved to be a detriment to the matching procedure as different projects used similar codes (001, 002) and some failed to inform the evaluation team of the link between the new code and the ULN when it was finally obtained. This meant that young people used different identification codes on each of the evaluation instruments, making the matching process impossible.

To remedy this situation, Phase II surveys were matched with a bespoke identification code which included the project name, organisation name, cohort number, year of project completion, the first three letters of the participant's surname, and their day of birth.

Figure 2.

Phase II Matching Mechanism

Before we get started it is very important that we have a way to match up your surveys. Instead of asking for your name, one way we are doing this is by asking you for a unique ID number. Please know that we will not use this information for any other purpose other than to match your surveys.

We will never know your name.

* You may need to ask a staff member for help to get your ID number *

Please use the following format for ID number:

ProjectNameOrganisationNameCohortNumberYearFirst three letters of participant's surnameDay of birth

e.g. *YOUTHSCAPESWCCohort12019BUR12*

e.g. *AMPLIFYForoigeCohort22020MCL10*

ID Number_____

By providing this level of detail, we could ensure that there was no duplication of identification codes across the different projects and cohorts and that young people were using a straightforward code that could be remembered across time points. Additionally, the young person was providing several pieces of information (project name, cohort number) that were previously completed as part of the participant profile, which allowed for more sophisticated analyses of the data.

CHAPTER 4: Assessing Factors Impacting Project Activity

Over the duration of the Programme, three series of focus groups were conducted with a select group of identified key project personnel to explore in greater detail the internal and external issues which they feel may have affected participants and project implementation. In total, of the approximately 240 youth workers employed over the course of the PEACE4Youth Programme, 107 project personnel from Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland took part in semi-structured focus groups.

Based on the evaluation team's previous experience exploring community relations interventions, including in-depth discussions with various key stakeholders, and its knowledge of relevant theoretical and empirical literature, a semi-structured focus group schedule was developed which was bespoke to each period. In line with the semi-structured format, the schedule was used flexibly to allow specific issues of interest to arise spontaneously, whilst at the same time allowing for systematic collection of data across focus groups.

Capitalising on this approach, the semi-structured focus group schedules broadly discussed topics included:
- Key success factors and challenges affecting impact implementation and achievement
- External factors influencing projects and their ability to achieve specific objectives
- Best practice and new relationships regarding the outcomes areas
- Relationship between delivery organisation and wider youth sector and community

Below we discuss the schedules developed for each time series and the participants recruited.

Series 1 (2018)

The first series of focus groups were conducted in the summer of 2018 during Phase I of the PEACE4Youth Programme. Six focus groups were conducted with project personnel from Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. Care was taken to ensure appropriate geographic spread. Each focus group included approximately 6 to 8 individuals and lasted between 47 and 69 minutes (average duration of 58 minutes). In total, 36 key project personnel from seven funded projects took part. Participants included youth workers who had on-the-ground experience of delivering the projects with young people and project coordinators. Focus groups were conducted at venues near participants and were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The purpose of these focus groups was to discuss:
- The challenges that projects faced in establishing the project
- Factors influencing ability to achieve project objectives (including internal and external issues which they felt had impacted positively or negatively)
- Building on the programme for Phase II

Series 2 (2019 & 2020)

The second series of focus groups were conducted in the summer of 2019 and the summer of 2020 during Phase II of the PEACE4Youth Programme. Eight focus groups were conducted with project personnel from Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. As with series 1, care was taken to ensure geographical spread when possible. Each focus group included approximately 6 to 8 individuals and lasted an average duration of 60 minutes. In total, 42 project staff, including youth workers, monitoring officers, and project coordinators / managers participated.

The focus groups that took place in 2019 explored the following topics:
- The successes and challenges of implementing the first half of Phase II;
- The connection between core project activities and the achievement of outcomes;
- External influences that have helped or hindered project impact;
- Recommendations for future support and programme design.

The 2020 focus groups were completed just as lockdown restrictions were easing in July 2020. As such, these discussions centred on the challenges that were presented by the move from face-to-face to online delivery at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as factors that had promoted programme successes during this time.

Series 3 (2022)

The final series of focus groups were conducted in early 2022 as Phase II of the PEACE4Youth Programme was coming to a close. Five focus groups were conducted with project personnel from Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. With this being the final phase of the evaluation and project activity was ending, participant recruitment for the focus groups was challenging. Many youth workers at this stage were either made redundant or left their jobs in pursuit of other jobs. Despite this challenge, we managed to recruit 29 participants. Three of the focus groups took place face-to-face, whereas two were online. The focus group on average lasted 60 minutes with 3 to 9 participants representing project coordinators, youth support workers, and specialist youth mentors.

The purpose of these focus groups was to discuss:

- Successes of the programme
- Challenges of the programme
- Sustainability of the programme moving forward
- The impacts of the closure of the programme
- Recommendations for future projects

PART III: Evaluating the Theory of Change

CHAPTER 5: Phase I: Testing the Theory of Change

This chapter will present the evaluation of the Programme-level theory of change based upon the output indicators, outcome areas and their indicators, and result indicators during Phase I of the PEACE4Youth Programme. First, information gathered from SEUPB on completion rates will be presented and discussed in relation to the anticipated output indicators. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the participant surveys which allow for an evaluation of the distance travelled for the participant sample collected across the full project on each of the outcome areas and their indicators. A breakdown of the demographics of the young people who took part in the evaluation and the survey completion rates will be outlined and an examination of the 'distance travelled' findings for each outcome area (Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship) based on the outcome indicators. A more nuanced breakdown of the outcome areas by various subgroups will follow in Chapter 6. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion as to whether or not direct participation in the Programme resulted in the movement of the result indicators.

Output Indicators

Initial Programme-level targeting aimed for an anticipated 1,875 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes. Following initial Project-level targets estimating a total of 1,980 participants, several projects revised their initial targets resulting in a new Phase I target of 1,680. Records suggest that at the conclusion of Phase I, a total of 1,625[6] young people had completed approved programmes. While this is **lower** than the initial Programme-level target of 1,875 it is **consistent** with the revised Project-level target of 1,680.

Outcome Indicators

Survey Completion Rates

The raw numbers of young people who completed surveys assessing the outcome indicators (before matching) are shown in Table 2 below. As would be expected in longitudinal data collection there is a decline in completion rates across the time points (Flick, 1988). First, a number of young people who initially completed the Time 1 survey may not have stayed for the full duration of the intervention, meaning that only one survey would be completed. Further, it should be noted that a number of projects would have only completed two time points, either because their project had started prior to the beginning of the evaluation (missing Time 1) or because the project had not yet concluded by

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[6] These figures are not fully verified and are subject to change.

the time the data was downloaded for analyses (missing Time 3). Additionally, projects reported that, for various reasons, they were unable to complete all three surveys.

Table 2.

Phase I Survey Completion Rates (Before Matching)

Participant profiles (no duplicates)	Time 1 (no duplicates)	Time 2 (no duplicates)	Time 3 (no duplicates)
N = 862	N = 876	N = 464	N = 393

To explore the distance travelled, surveys were matched according to the reported ULN (for Northern Ireland participants) or unique ID (for Republic of Ireland participants) that was entered for the participant profile and for each survey. Due to significant challenges with the matching mechanisms, there was a discrepancy between the numbers of young people who completed each survey and those for whom there was matching data (i.e. an ID on a participant profile and on at least two survey time points). Projects reported difficulty obtaining ULNs and used their own unique identification code until they received the appropriate ULNs. This means that the same participant would be using two different codes over the course of the evaluation making it impossible to match across the surveys. On a practical point, the ULNs themselves were nine digits in length, as often is the case, young people may not input the ULN correctly either forgetting it entirely or transposing a set of numbers by mistake thus making the process of matching impossible.

Table 3.

Phase I Survey Completion Rates (After Matching)*

Time 1 (with participant profile)	Time 2 (w/Time1 & participant profile)	Time 3 (w/Time1, Time2, & participant profile)
N = 844	N = 151 (17.9 % retention)	N = 53 (6.3 % retention)

The participant profiles included demographic information, if there was no identifiable participant profile to at least two surveys, it was impossible to include this data in a dataset that would enable an analysis of subgroup differences. The figures for those young people who completed a participant profile, Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 (with matched identification code) are shown in Table 3 above. Due to the discrepancy in matched data, the evaluation team made a decision to analyse the data received from two different angles: measuring distance travelled for young people who completed **at least two time points** – this would include young people who either completed Surveys 1 & 2,

Surveys 1 & 3, or Surveys 2 and 3. In addition, subgroup analyses (i.e. results broken down by demographic information) could be completed on the smaller matched dataset of those who had a participant profile matched with all three survey time-points.

Participants who completed any two time points were therefore merged into one dataset (Time 1 and Time 2 survey only (n=145); Time 1 and Time 3 survey only (n=156); and Time 2 and Time 3 survey only (n=52)). This gave a matched sample of 353 participants. Distance travelled was measured by the change in mean scores on each of the outcome measures between the two time points. Statistical significance was determined through the use of paired samples t-tests. In addition, because the time points between the two surveys varied for each participant, a second series of analyses used statistical regression to control for length of time (i.e. how long participants were in the programme). The mean number of days between survey time-points was 62.5 days.

Demographics Breakdown

862 participant profiles were completed, providing detailed demographic information about participants in the funded projects (3 participants opted out). There was a fairly even distribution of gender, with 47.1% reporting they were female, 52.0% male, and 0.9% other, as well as for age group, with 53.5% reporting they were between 14-17 years and 42.9% between 18-24 years. A small minority of individuals indicating they were either 12-13 years or 25-26 years (0.7%). The self-reported community backgrounds for the young people skewed towards the Catholic (59.4%) compared to the Protestant community (25.6%). A sizeable minority of young people reported they were from neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community or that they were unsure (14.9%).

Figure 3.

*Phase I Gender, Age, and Community Background Demographics[7]*

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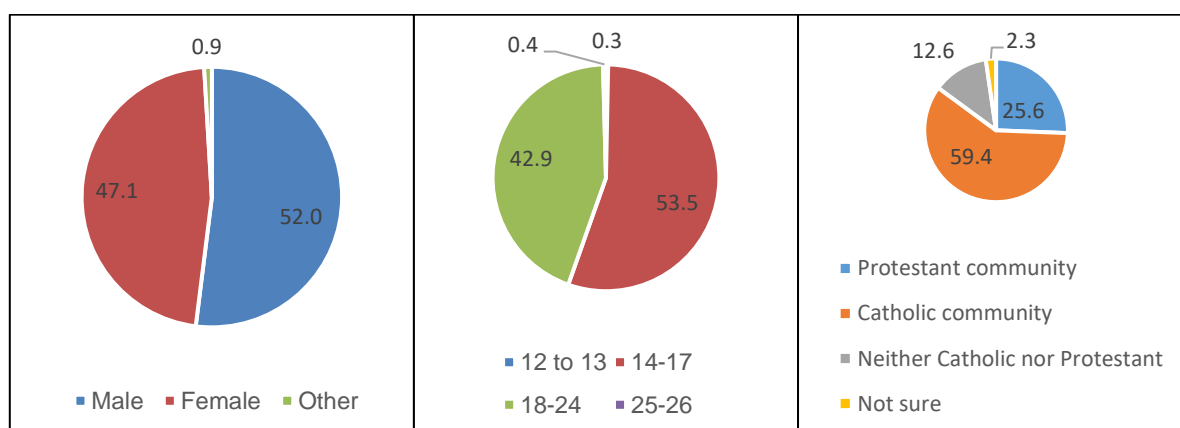
[7] Young people outside of the targeted age range (14-24 years) may be due to completion error and/or the extent to which young people "aged-into" and "aged-out of" the programme.

In terms of jurisdiction, consistent with the anticipated ratio, four out of five young people reported they were from Northern Ireland (80.5%) and one out of five reporting that they were from the Republic of Ireland (19.5%). Of the young people who indicated that they were from Northern Ireland, 53.7% self-reported they were from the Catholic community, 31.1% from the Protestant community, 9.8% were from neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community, and 2.5% were unsure. Of the young people who indicated that they were from the Republic of Ireland, 82.2% self-reported they were from the Catholic community whereas only 5.5% were from the Protestant community. A further 9.8% indicated they were from neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community and 2.5% were unsure. These findings reflect the general over representation of young people from the Catholic community compared to young people from the Protestant community within the sample described above; however, this discrepancy is more pronounced for young people from the Republic of Ireland.

Figure 4.

Phase I Jurisdiction, Ethnicity, and Disability Status Demographics
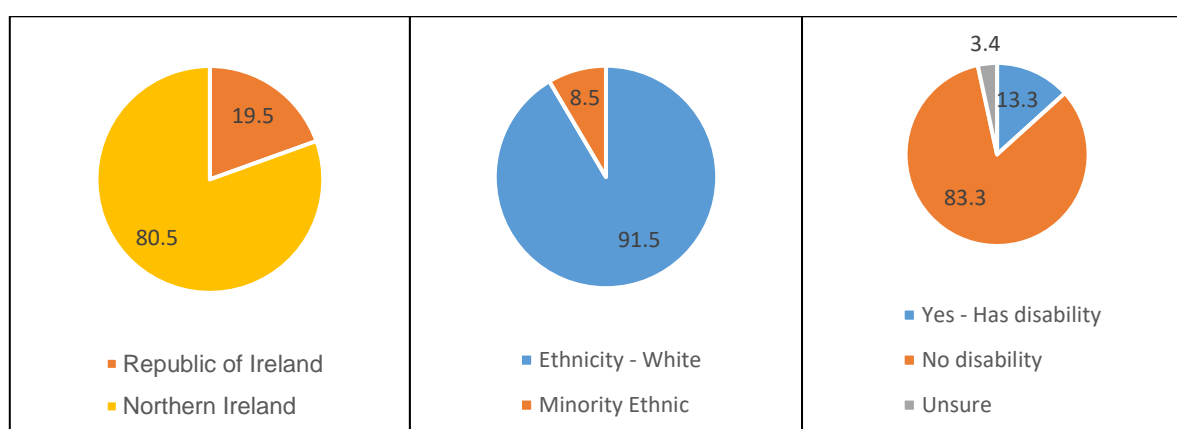
The ethnic background of the young people was predominately white (91.5%), with only a minority indicating that they were from a minority ethnic group (7.7%)[8]. In terms of disability, a small group indicated that they had a disability 13.3% with 83.3% reporting that they did not while 3.4% were unsure. Of note, the percentage of young people who reported they were from a minority ethnic group or had a disability were much higher than those found in the 2011 NI Census (1.8% minority ethnic population; 2.7% 15–19-year-olds and 3.1% 20 to 24 year olds reporting a disability). In addition, 9.9% of the participants indicated that they were a carer for someone they lived with who was sick or elderly or who had a disability.

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[8] Of those individuals identifying that they were from a minority ethnic background, 1.3% Black, 0.3% Indian, 0.1% Polish, 0.5% Romanian, 0.3% Lithuanian, 1.1% Irish Traveller, 2.9% other ethnicity, and 1.2% mixed background.

In addition to self-reported demographics, young people were asked to record the first half of their home postcode (e.g. BT1, BT2 etc.), or their eircode if they were in the Republic of Ireland. If young people did not know this information, they were asked to indicate their hometown or village. This data was used to create a Google Map of participant's locations (n = 862).

It should be noted that as eircodes identify a specific address, only the towns/villages indicated from the eircodes were included in the dataset that was used to create the map to maintain anonymity (this is why there appears to be one pin for Dundalk, Monaghan, and so on). The map enabled the evaluation team to demonstrate coverage of enrolment in the Programme across the eligible regions of Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland. The map created from this data is included in Figure 5.

Not surprisingly young people's home locations were congregated in urban settings with high populations. The map suggests, however, that there are significant gaps in coverage in the Causeway Coast and Glens area of Antrim and in more rural parts of Armagh, Fermanagh, Tyrone in Northern Ireland, and in Leitrim and Cavan in the Republic of Ireland. Comparing the distribution of young people's home locations with the location of each of the funded projects it is clear that gaps in coverage correspond to the locations, or the lack of thereof, of the individual organisations which make up each of the funded projects.

Figure 5.

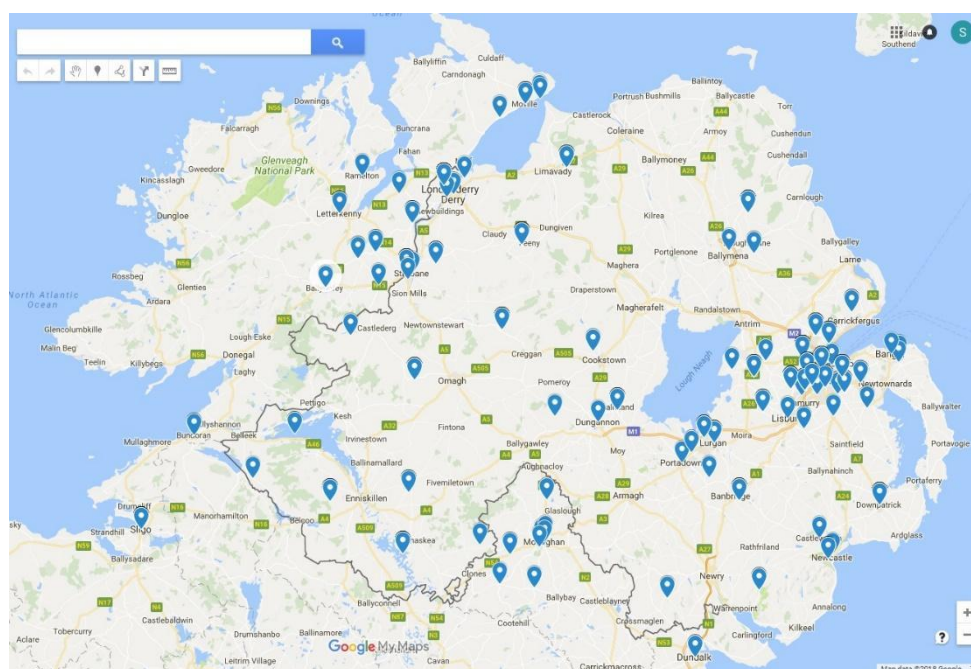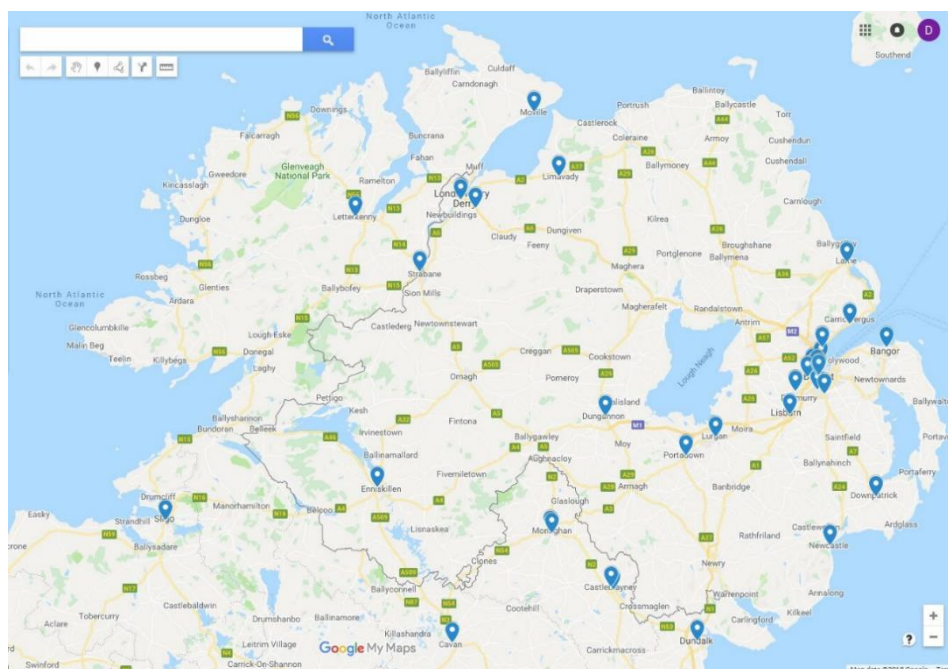*Phase I Map of Participant Locations*

Figure 6.

Phase I Map of Project Locations

Overall Distance Travelled on Outcome Areas

Below we outline the distance travelled for the three outcome areas – Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship – as explained by statistically significant change on each of the outcome indicators over time. As discussed previously, progression on each of the outcome indicators are measured by differences in the mean scores between the time points as captured by one or more psychometrically validated scales. While differences on each of the scales are important and will be discussed in turn, the outcome indicators, and the scales used to measure them, are then used to inform the broader outcome areas; as such, it is the overall change across the outcome indicators that is critical to focus on.

Good Relations

Overall, there is clear evidence of positive distance travelled in terms of the Good Relations outcome are indicating that young people had enhanced their capacity to form positive and effective relationships with young people from a different background than themselves; including those from the other community, a different jurisdiction, and from a minority ethnic background.

General attitudes and behaviours. In terms of the outcome indicators related to more general attitudes and behaviours, and the survey measures used to assess these, there were positive changes in regard to:

- Stronger respect for diversity

- Stronger belief in their ability to make friends with someone from a different group (cross-group self-efficacy)

Attitudes and behaviours towards the "other" community. For those outcome indicators specific to attitudes and behaviours related to the other community, and the survey measures used to assess these, there were positive changes in regard to:
- Greater frequency and quality of contact with young people from the other community during project activities
- Greater frequency and quality of contact with young people from the other community outside of project activities

Cross-border attitudes and behaviours. In regard to the outcome indicators specific to cross-border relations, and the survey measures used to assess them, there were positive changes in regards to:
- An increase in perceived cross-border friendship closeness

Attitudes and behaviours towards minority ethnic groups. Finally, in terms of those outcome indicators related to attitudes and behaviours towards members of minority ethnic groups, and the survey measures used to assess them, there were positive changes in regard to:
- Greater frequency and quality of contact with individuals from minority ethnic groups
- More positive attitudes towards young people from minority ethnic groups

There was no significant movement in participants' understanding of their own identity as measured through identity strength and / or perceived family ethnic socialisation, nor were there any significant differences between the two time-points on young people's reported levels of helping behaviours towards members of the other community; number of cross-community friends; cross-community friendship closeness; number of cross-border friends; cross-community intergroup anxiety; or cross-border intergroup anxiety.

Figure 7 includes a graphical representation of the distance travelled for the good relations measures. Due to differences in the Likert scales used across each indicator (i.e., some used a 5-point while others used a 7-point scale) the average score for the first and second surveys have been adjusted to a 1-4 scale to allow for direct comparisons. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 7.

Phase I Good Relations Survey Measures: Mean scores from first and second surveys (adjusted to a 1-4 scale)
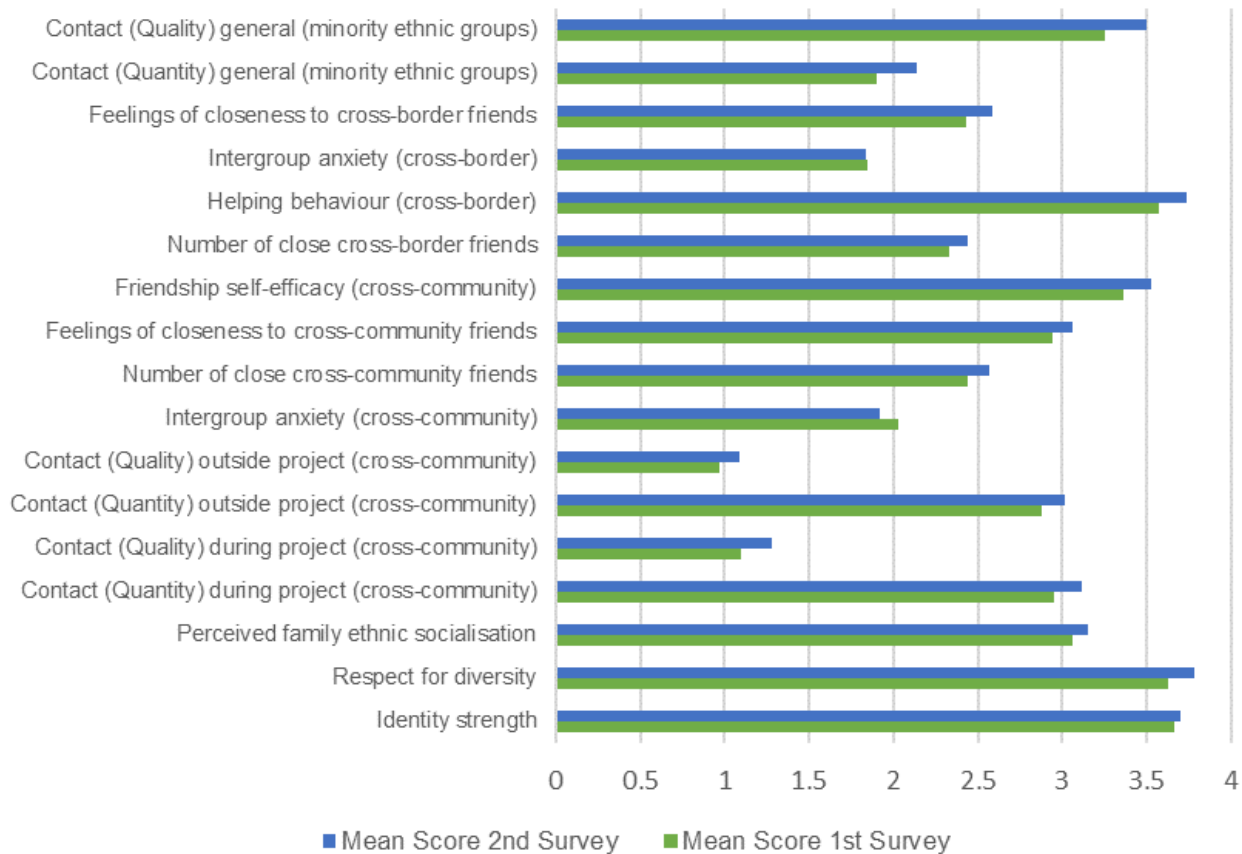
Personal Development

Analysis of the scales measuring the different outcome indicators related to the outcome area of personal development suggest positive distance travelled on the majority of outcome indicators. There were positive changes regarding:

- Stronger self-esteem
- Stronger self-efficacy
- Stronger environmental mastery
- Increased leadership skills
- Stronger resilience
- Willingness to engage in positive help-seeking behaviours

These findings suggest that young people have developed confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; leadership; resiliency and determination; and other relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being due to participation in the PEACE4Youth Programme.

No significant movement was found for participants' levels of self-acceptance, feelings of agency in the community, or reported positive relations / working effectively with others. It should be noted here that the scale measuring positive relations / working effectively with others showed poor internal reliability and does not appear to be an acceptable scale to effectively measure this psychological construct.

Figure 8 includes a graphical representation of the distance travelled for the personal development measures. Due to differences in the Likert scales used across each indicator (i.e., some used a 5-point while others used a 7-point scale) the average score for the first and second surveys have been adjusted to a 1-5 scale to allow for direct comparisons. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 8.

Phase I Personal Development Survey Measures: Mean scores from first and second surveys (adjusted to a 1-5 scale)
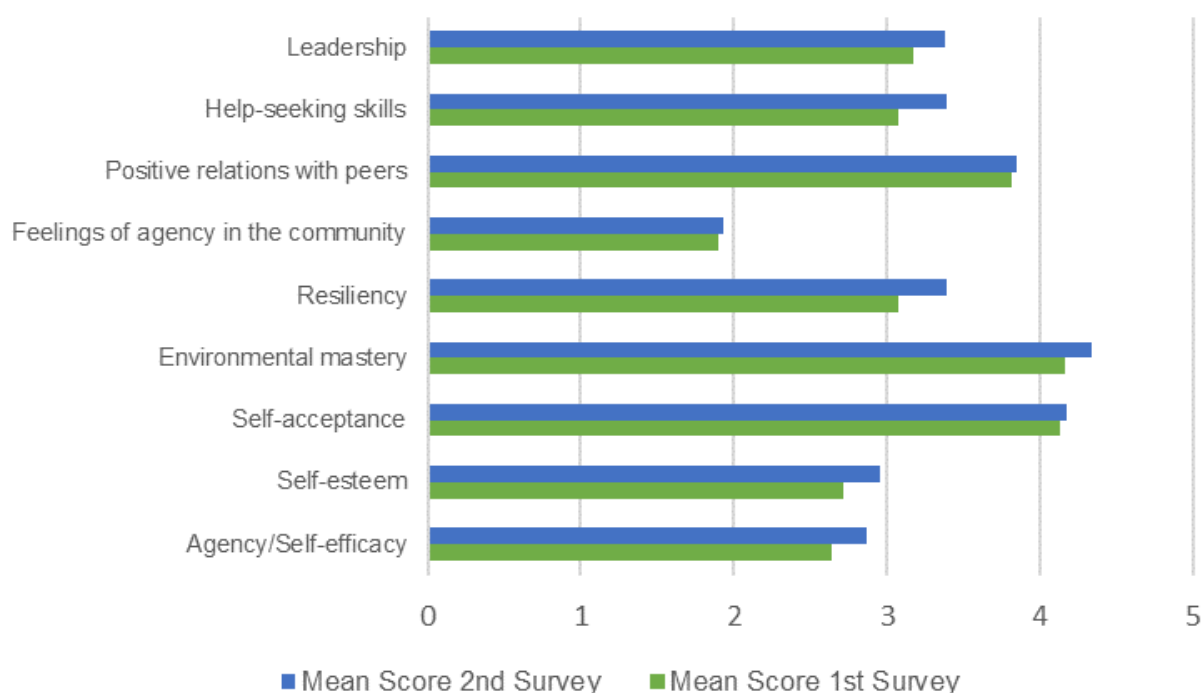
Citizenship

For the citizenship outcome area, positive progression was evident on the majority of the outcome indicators. Specifically, there were positive changes in regard to:

- Civic engagement and participation
- Support for peacebuilding

- Family cohesion / family positive relations

As a result of participation in the PEACE4Youth Programme, young people have developed their capabilities for engagement with useful services; volunteering in communities of place and / or interest; and positive family relations. While primarily positive due to a significant support for peacebuilding and civic engagement, there were mixed results for positive participation in community structures, initiatives and democratic processes as young people did not show a change in their reported participation in sectarian behaviours. Similarly, no change was evident for helping behaviours / prosocial behaviours towards their own community - a measure of positive community relations.

Figure 9 includes a graphical representation of the distance travelled for the citizenship measures. Due to differences in the Likert scales used across each indicator (i.e., some used a 5-point while others used a 7-point scale) the average score for the first and second surveys have been adjusted to a 1-5 scale to allow for direct comparisons. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 9.

Phase I Citizenship Survey Measures: Mean scores for first and second surveys (adjusted to a 1-5 scale)
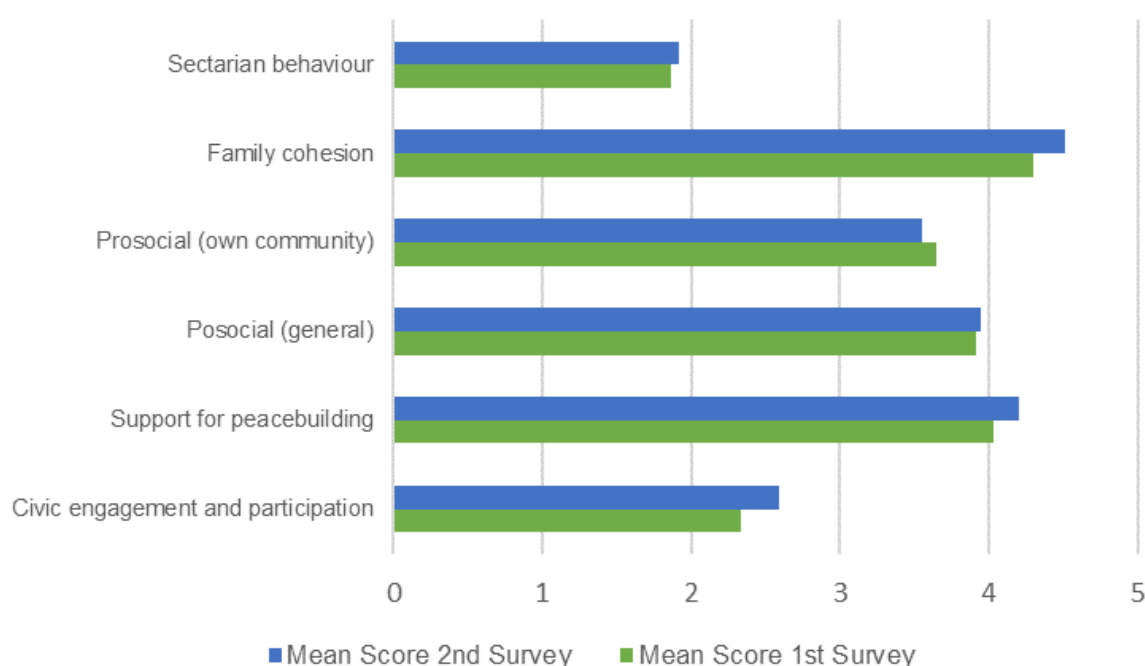
Qualifications and Progression

Participants who completed the Time 3 survey were asked to indicate what their intentions were upon finishing their PEACE IV project, and whether they had obtained any qualifications during their involvement in the programme. The following bar charts represent the percentages of participants who indicated their progression destinations and accreditations achieved.

Figure 10.

Phase I Progression Destination of Participants at the End of the PEACE4Youth Projects (%)
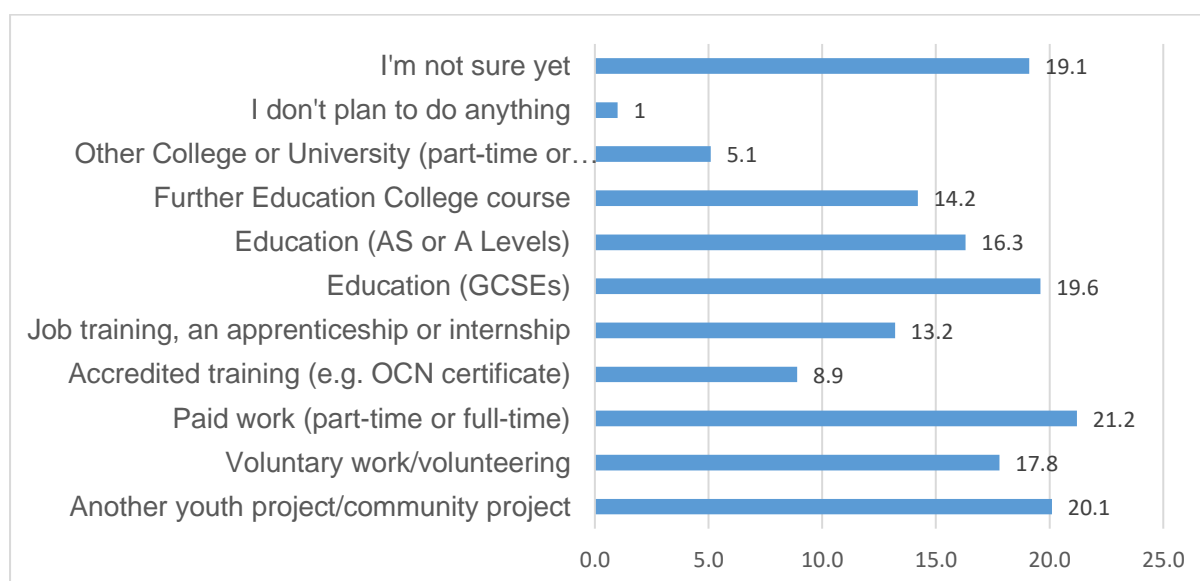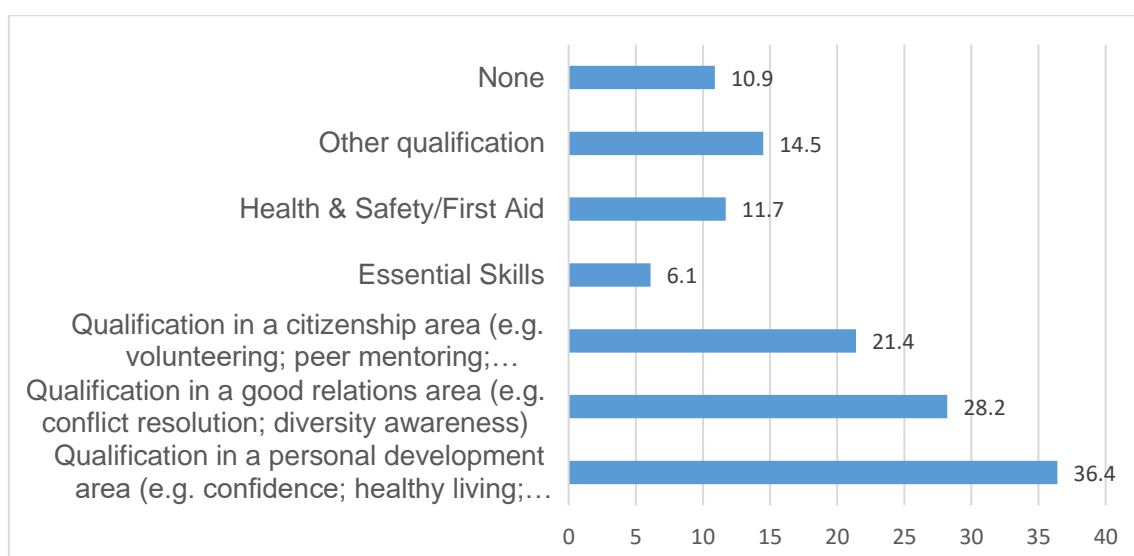

Figure 11.

Phase I Accreditations Achieved by Participants by the End of their PEACE4Youth Projects (%)

Summary

Across the three outcome areas, the majority of outcome indicators showed evidence of positive distance travelled over the course of the PEACE4Youth Programme. Moving towards the objective of enhancing the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society, young people have developed: a greater understanding of and respect for diversity; an awareness of and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others; respect for others from a different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations; a positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background; confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; leadership; resiliency and determination; relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being; engagement with useful services in the community; volunteering in communities of place and / or interest; and positive family relations.

Where the PEACE4Youth Programme appears to be showing limited reach is in regard to those psychological constructs related to self-reflection and intragroup dynamics. For example, no change was found regarding an understanding of their own identity; self-acceptance; participation in sectarian behaviours; feelings of agency in the community; and positive relations within their own community.

Result Indicators

Below we present the PEACE IV Programme baseline data on the result indicators as gathered from the 2013 Northern Ireland Young Life and Times survey in comparison to data on similar measures gathered from young people participating in the PEACE4Youth Programme.

Socialise and/or Play Sport

When asked to what extent they socialised and/or played sport with people from a different community as their own, two in every three (68%) participants said that they sometimes, often, or very often interacted with young people from a different community background than themselves. This figure is slightly higher than the comparison group derived of 16-year-olds completing the 2013 Young Life and Times Survey (67%) and the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey (58%), but **lower** than the target of 78% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

Relations Better Now than 5-years ago

When asked whether they believed that relations between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities are better now than they were five years ago, 64% of young people who had

participated in PEACE4Youth felt that relations were better. This is **higher** than both the 2013 baseline of 45%, the 2022 Young Life and Times of 37%, as well as the 2023 Programme target value of 50%.

Relations Will Be Better in 5-years

Similarly, when asked whether they believed that relations between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities will better in five years, 60% of young people who had participated in PEACE4Youth felt that relations will be better. This is **higher** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline (2013) of 38%, the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey of 37%, as well as the 2023 target value of 45%.

CHAPTER 6: Phase I Sub-Group Outcome Indicators

In this chapter, we explore potential differences between subgroups within the dataset on the various outcome indicators. To complete these analyses, data from participants who completed the three time-points of the survey as well as a participant profile (demographic data) were analysed separately from data contained within the main two time-point dataset (used for the main 'distance travelled' findings). Mixed analysis of variance (Mixed ANOVA) tests were then used to ascertain whether changes in the outcome measures over time were significantly different for different groups i.e., whether there were any differences in the changes observed by gender, community background, or age groups.

In total, there were 53 participants with matched information for the participant profile, Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 surveys. It was therefore possible to conduct longitudinal analyses (mixed analysis of variance) on this smaller dataset to investigate how the outcome measures varied over time for different groups. Below we present findings where specific differences of interest were found. Due to small numbers, and low power to engage in robust statistical analyses we present significant findings four for the subgroups organised by outcome indicator; however, these findings should be viewed with some caution.

## Good Relations

Respect for Diversity

Significant differences in the distance travelled on the respect for diversity measure were evident between participants based upon their self-reported community background[9]. Overall, those who reported they were from Neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community (or were not sure) had the highest levels of respect for diversity, significantly higher than both those from a Catholic or Protestant background[10]. Examination of the overall effect of time on levels of respect for diversity shows that there was a significant difference from Time 2 to Time 3, based upon community background, and this is reflective in the line graph shown in Figure 8. Indeed, it appears that levels of respect for diversity remained relatively constant for participants from a Catholic background and participants who were Neither/Not sure, but for young people from a Protestant background, there was a steep rise from Time 2 to Time 3, indicating that this is where the significant effect arises.

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[9] In all mixed ANOVAs reported, assumptions were tested and where necessary were corrected for violations. Significant interaction between community background and time for respect for diversity: $F_{(4, 104)} = 3.01$, $p = .02$.

[10] Confirmed by Tukey HSD post-hoc tests.

Figure 12.

Phase I Good Relations - Respect for Diversity Distance Travelled by Community Background
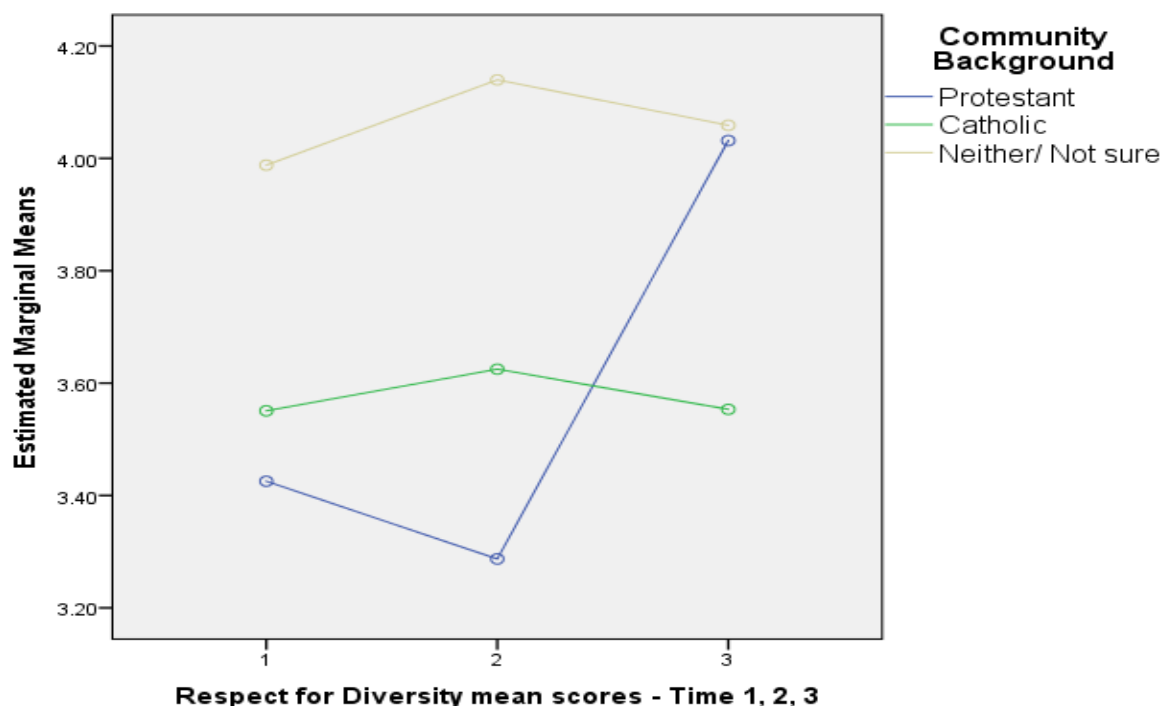
Quality of Intergroup Contact During Project Activities

Gender differences across time were apparent on the intergroup contact quality during project activities[11] measure, one of the other measures used to assess progression in the Good Relations outcome indicator. Findings showed that males and females had significantly different opinions of the positivity of their interactions with those from a different community when they met up with others outside of project activities. Whilst the quality of females' reported interactions were in a positive trajectory from the beginning of their projects, the quality of males' reported interactions dipped significantly at Time 2.

However, both males and females had significantly more positive interactions with others outside of their project activities at Time 3 when compared to Time 1 (see Figure 12). The decline in males' self-reported ratings at Time 2 could be a result of increased self-awareness of the quality of their interactions with others because of having participated in a PEACE4Youth project for 3-4 months, or it could also have been due to contextual factors. These factors could include an increased tension within a community or geographical area (young people could have been completing their Time 2

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[11] Significant interaction between gender and time: $F(2, 104) = 3.44$, $p = .04$.

survey around the time of the July marching season in 2018, and there were some violent and antisocial incidents in several areas where participants had been recruited from).

Figure 13.

Phase I Good Relations – Intergroup Contact Quality (during project activities) by Gender
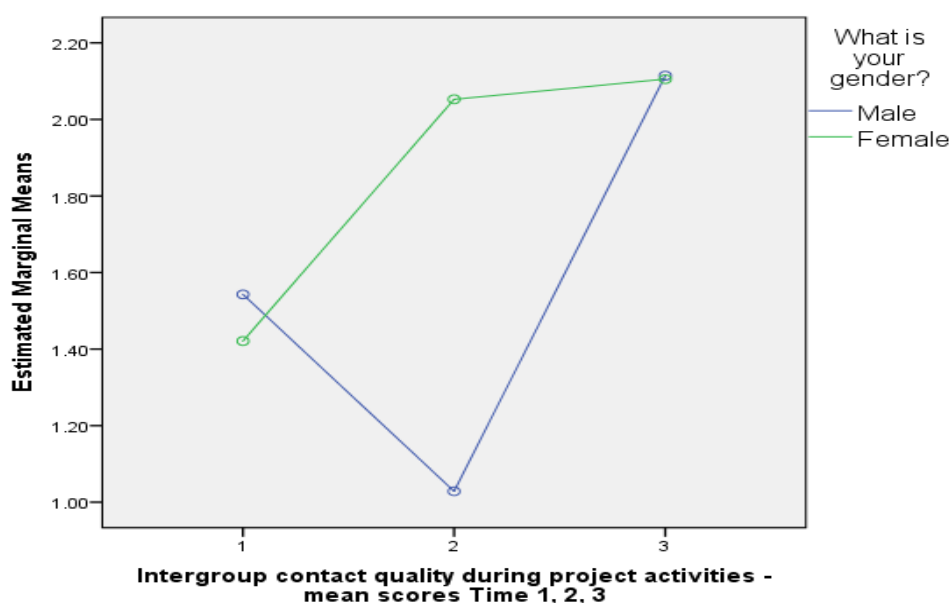
Personal Development

Self-Efficacy

For self-efficacy, both gender and age differences across time were observed. Looking first at gender, females began their projects with significantly lower levels of self-efficacy than males, but by Time 3, females' self-reported levels of self-efficacy had overtaken males (see Figure 14)[12]. Males' levels of self-efficacy had increased between Time 1 and Time 3 as well, albeit not significantly.

In terms of age group differences, as Figure 15 shows, while the younger age group in the sample (12-17 years old) reported significantly lower levels of self-efficacy at Time 1 than the older age group (18-26 years old), their levels of self-efficacy followed a strong upward trajectory, such that they finished their projects at Time 3 with significantly higher levels of self-efficacy than the older age group[13]. In the older age group, levels of self-efficacy remained similar at each time point – while there was a dip from Time 1 to Time 2 and Time 3, the decrease was not significant.

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[12]Significant interaction between gender and time: $F(2, 104) = 4.73$, $p = .01$.

[13] Significant interaction between age group and time: $F(2, 102) = 5.22$, $p = .01$.

Figure 14.

Phase I Personal Development – Self-Efficacy Distance Travelled by Gender
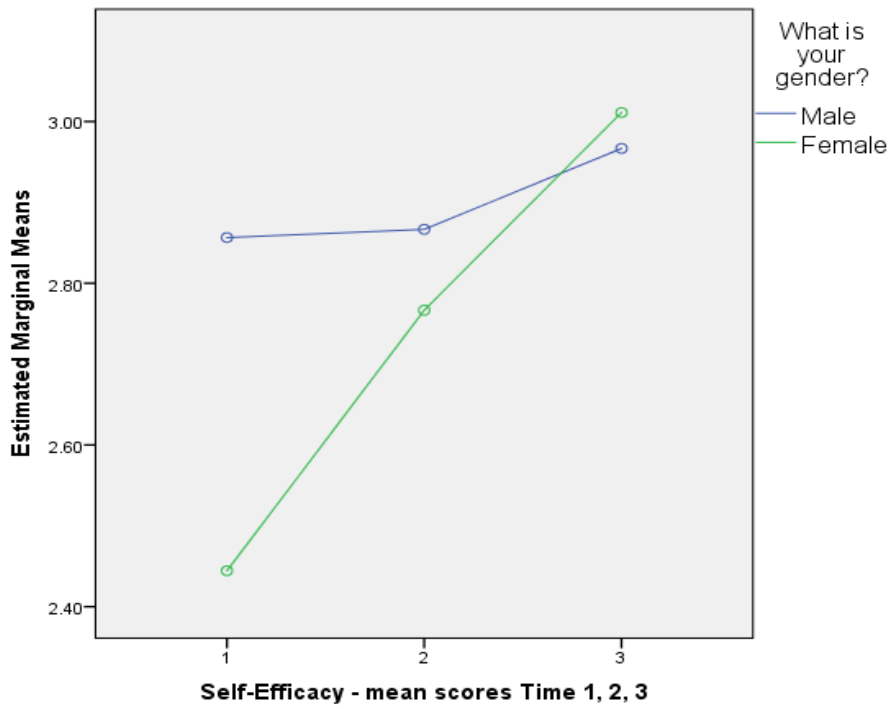
Figure 15.

Phase I Personal Development – Self-Efficacy Distance Travelled by Age Group
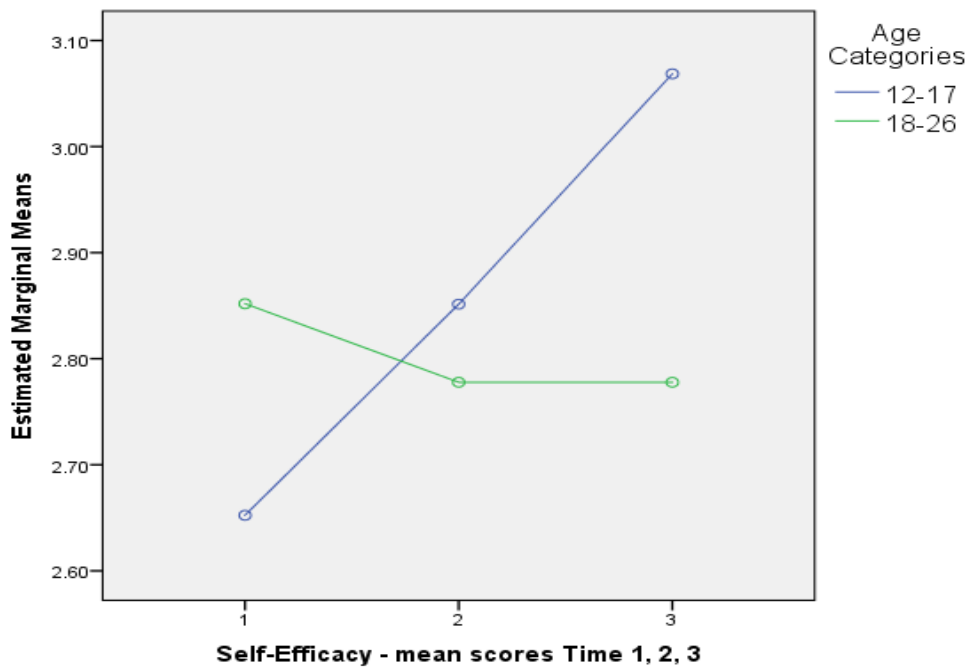
Leadership Skills

For the Leadership Skills measure, significant differences by self-reported community background were observed[14]. While participants from a Catholic background began their projects with the highest levels of self-reported leadership skills, their levels did not significantly decrease or increase over time (see Figure 16). However, participants from a Protestant background showed a steep upwards trajectory, particularly between Time 2 and Time 3, with young people self-identifying as members of the Protestant community reporting the highest level of self-reported leadership skills at Time 3. Participants who were Neither/ Not sure showed a steady increase in their Leadership skills between both Time 1 and Time 2 and between Time 2 and Time 3.

Figure 16.

Phase I Personal Development – Leadership Skills Distance Travelled by Community Background

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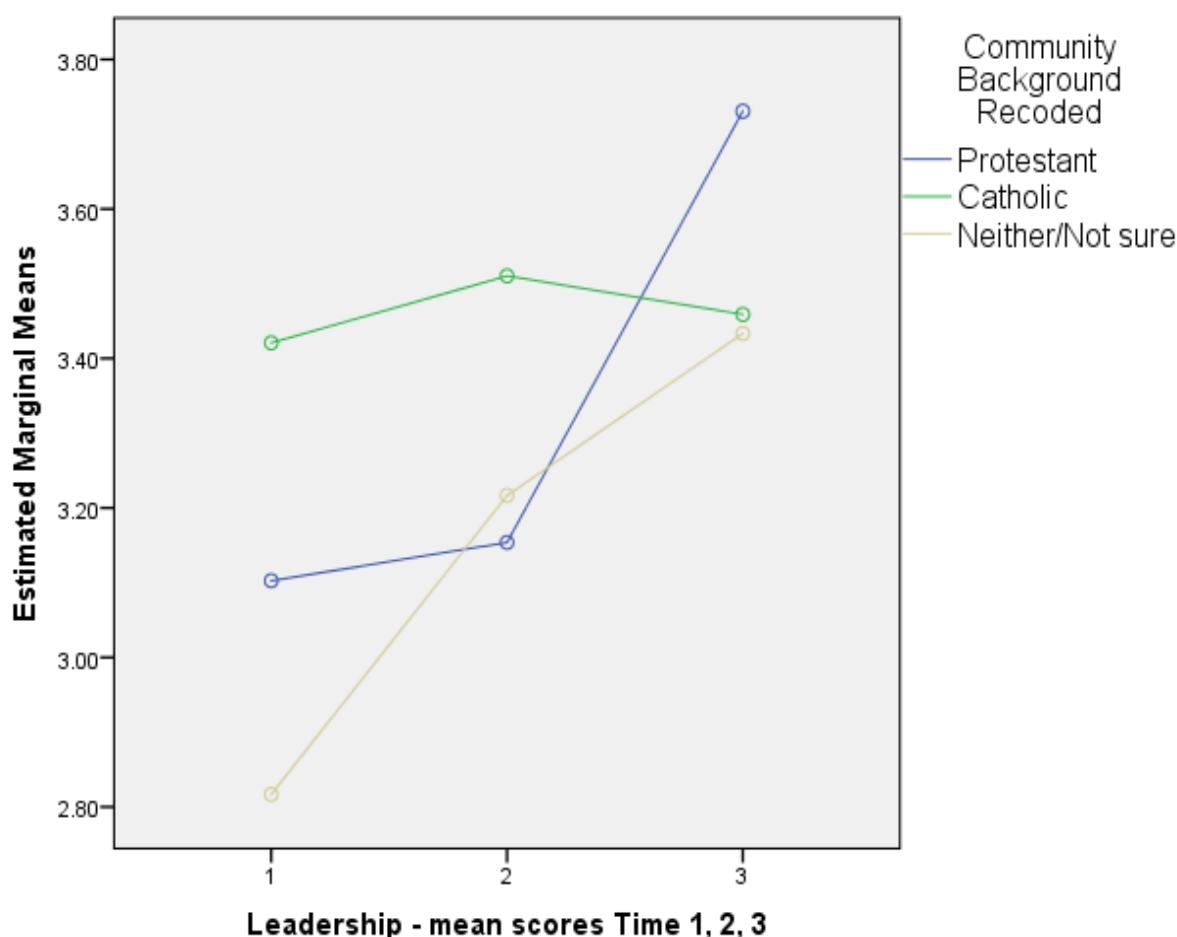
[14] Significant interaction between community background and time: $F_{(4, 104)} = 2.80$, $p = .03$.

Citizenship

Civic Engagement

Levels of civic engagement and participation differed significantly over time by age group[15]. While younger and older participants reported similar levels of civic engagement and participation at Time1, younger participants' levels rose sharply at Time 2 but fell at Time 3. Older participations however showed a steady increase between Time 1 and Time 2 and between Time 2 and Time 3, with significantly higher levels of civic engagement and participation at Time 3 than younger participants (see Figure 17). This could be due to more volunteering and participation opportunities being available to older participants.

Figure 17.

Phase I Citizenship – Civic Engagement Distance Travelled by Age Group
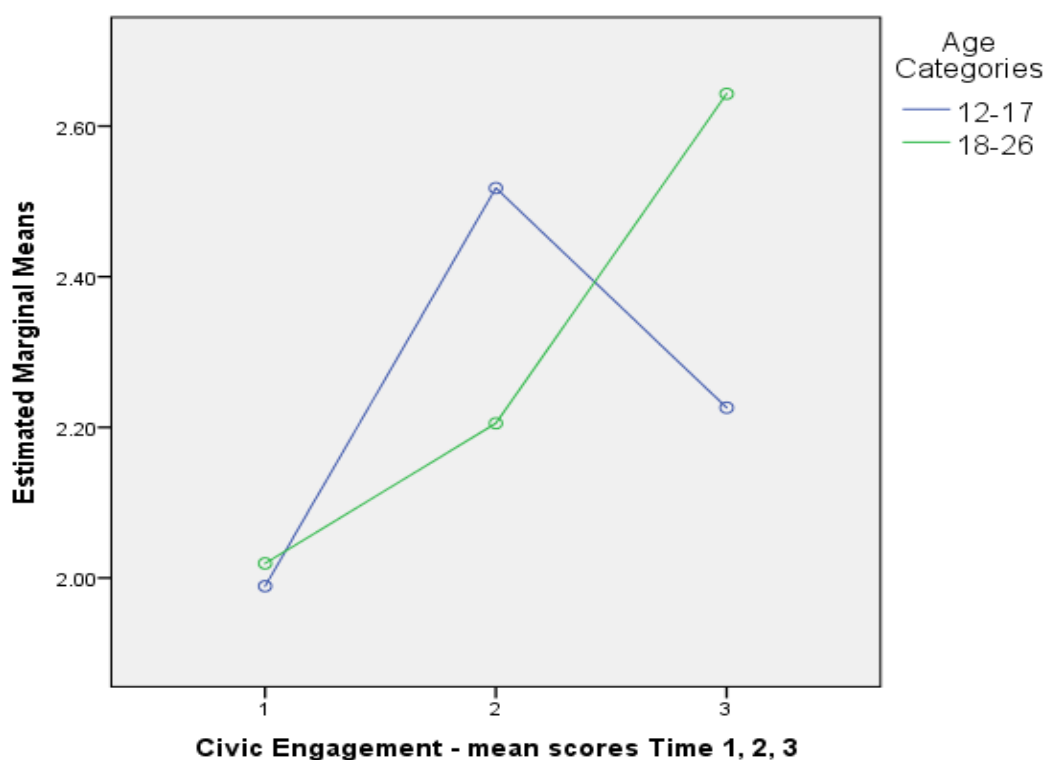
Participation in Sectarian Behaviours

Lastly, gender differences across time were observed for self-reported participation in sectarian behaviours[16]. Whilst females' reported participation in sectarian behaviours remained lower than the

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[15] Significant interaction between age group and time: $F(2, 98) = 3.42$, $p = .04$.
[16] Significant interaction between gender and time: $F(2, 96) = 3.56$, $p = .03$.

levels reported by males from Time 1 through to Time 3, their participation levels significantly increased between Time 1 and Time 3, whereas males' levels significantly decreased between Time 1 and Time 3 (see Figure 18).

Figure 18.

Phase I Citizenship – Participation in Sectarian Behaviours Distance Travelled by Gender

Summary

Matched data for those young people who completed all three time-points of the survey revealed several key differences based upon community background, gender, age group, cohort type, and participation location (rural/urban and Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland). These differences could be explained by several factors, including developmental reasons, contextual reasons (e.g., if surveys were completed at times of high tension in local communities), or heightened levels of self-awareness and self-reflection as participants spent time on their projects. Statistical analyses showed however that the relative magnitude of these differences between groups was small in statistical terms; as such, the importance of these differences should be considered accordingly.

CHAPTER 7: Phase II Testing the Theory of Change

This chapter will present the evaluation of Programme-level theory of change based upon the output indicators, outcome areas and the indicators, and result indicators during Phase II of the PEACE4Youth Programme. First, information gathered from SEUPB on completion rates will be presented and discussed in relation to the anticipated output indicators. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the participant surveys which allow for an evaluation of the distance travelled for the participant sample collected across the full project on each of the outcome areas and their indicators. A breakdown of the demographics of the young people who took part in the evaluation of Phase II and the survey completion rates will be outlined. This will be followed by an examination of the 'distance travelled' findings for each outcome area (Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship) based on the outcome indicators. A more nuanced breakdown of the outcome areas by various subgroups will follow in Chapter 8.

Output Indicators

Initial Programme-level targeting aimed for an anticipated 5,525 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completing approved programmes. Following initial Project-level targets anticipated 5,806 participants; however, several projects revised their initial targets because of Phase I achievement resulting in a Project-level target of 6,278 participants. Records suggest that at the conclusion of Phase II, a total of 6,307[17] young people had completed approved programmes. This is **higher** than the initial Phase II Programme-level target, as well as the revised Phase II Project-level target.

Outcome Indicators

Survey Completion Rates

As would be expected in longitudinal data collection there is a decline in completion rates across the time points (Flick, 1988). For the PEACE4Youth projects specifically, we know that several young people who initially completed the Time 1 survey may not have stayed for the full duration of the intervention, meaning that only one survey would be completed. Additionally, due to the timing of the Phase II mid-term evaluation report, several projects would have only completed two time points because the project had not yet concluded by the time the data was downloaded for analyses (i.e., missing Time 3). Finally, with lockdown, several young people may have lacked the motivation to

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[17] These figures are not fully verified and are subject to change.

complete the surveys on their own, away from the guidance of youth workers. Overall survey completion rates are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

Phase II Survey Completion Rates (Before Matching)

	Time 1 (no duplicates)	Time 2 (no duplicates)	Time 3 (no duplicates)
Core Version	3,554	2,242	1,806
Illustrated & Arabic version	260	179	162

To explore distance travelled, surveys were matched across time points using the unique evaluation ID code that was entered for each survey. The use of the new matching system led to a significantly higher number of matched surveys across the time points than was the case during Phase I of the evaluation. For the Core Version of the survey in Phase I, the retention rate by Time 2 was only 17.9% and by Time 3 was 6.3%; in Phase II, the Time 2 rate more than doubled to 44.6% and the Time 3 rate trebled to 17.7% - see Table 5.

Table 5.

Phase II Survey Completion Rates (After Matching)

	Time 1	Time 2 (w/ Time 1)		Time 3 (w/ Time 1 and 2)	
Core Version	N = 3,554	N=1,586	44.6% retention	N = 630	17.7% retention
Illustrated & Arabic Version	N = 260	N = 74	28.4% retention	N = 14	5.4% retention

Demographics Breakdown

Demographic information was collected from 4,268 participants (N = 3,554 Time 1 Core Version, N = 714 Time 1 & 2 Illustrated and Arabic versions), providing detailed background information about participants from all 11 funded projects. There was a fairly even distribution of gender, 50.2% reported they were male, 48.9% reporting they were female, and 1.4% other, as well as age with the majority between 14-17 years (76.8%) and the minority between 18-24 years (21.5%). A small percentage of individuals indicated they were either 13 or 25 years old (1.7%). The self-reported community backgrounds for the young people were skewed towards the Catholic community (53.4%), with around one-quarter of participants reporting that they were from the Protestant

community (21.86%). An additional, one-quarter of young people reported that they were from neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community (11.5%), from both backgrounds/mixed (6.3%) or that they were unsure which community they were from (7.0%).

Figure 19.

Phase II Gender, Age[18], and Community Background Demographics
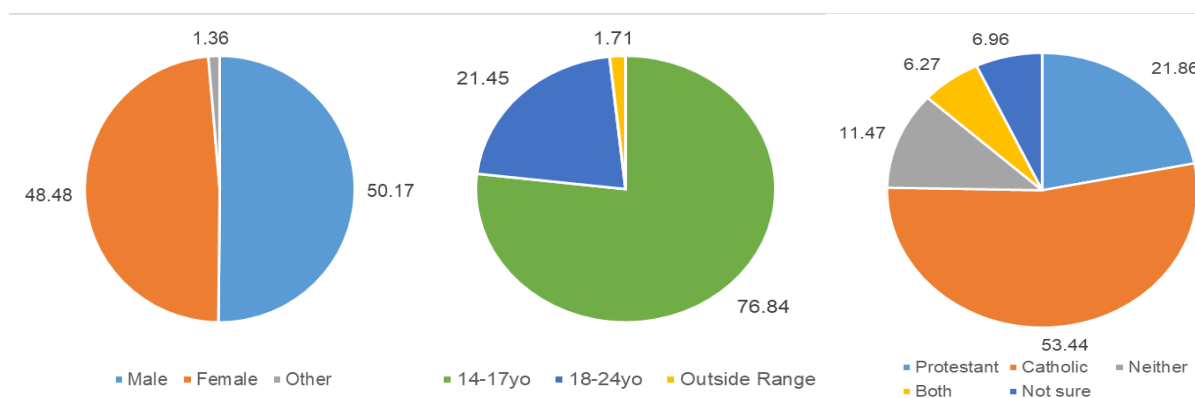
In terms of jurisdiction, just over three quarters of young people reported they were from Northern Ireland (76.5%) and just under a quarter reported that they were from the Republic of Ireland (23.5%). Of the young people who indicated that they were from Northern Ireland, 45.1% self-reported they were from the Catholic community, 30.5% from the Protestant community, 11.7% were from neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community, 7.7% had a mixed background, and 5.0% were unsure. Of the young people who indicated that they were from the Republic of Ireland, 73.1% self-reported they were from the Catholic community whereas only 2.1% were from the Protestant community; a further 11.9% indicated they were from neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community; 4.1% had a mixed background, and 8.8% were unsure. These findings reflect the general over-representation of young people from the Catholic community compared to young people from the Protestant community within the sample described above; however, this discrepancy is more pronounced for young people from the Republic of Ireland.

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[18] A minority of young people completing the participant surveys fall outside of the targeted age range (14-24 years). To some degree this may represent completion error on behalf of the young person completing the Time 1 survey. However, project personnel indicated that a small number of young people "aged-into" and "aged-out of" the programme.

Figure 20.

Phase II Jurisdiction, Ethnicity, and Disability Status Demographics
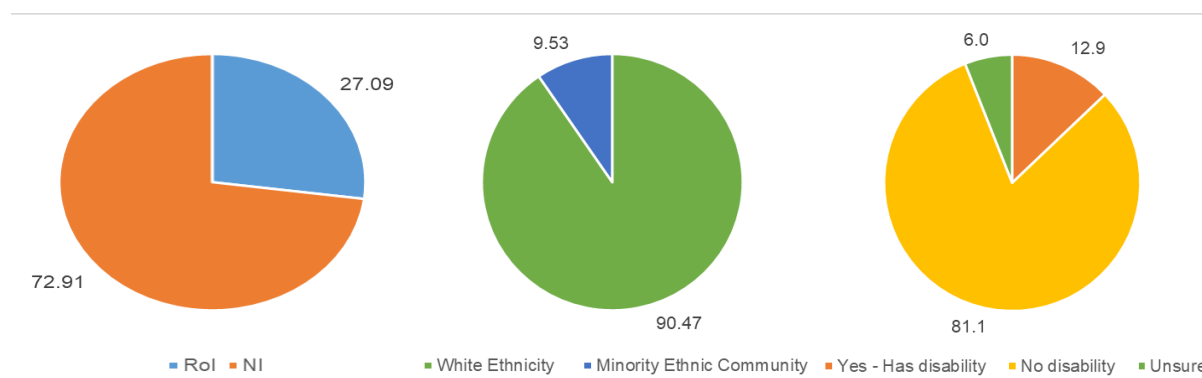
The ethnic background of the young people was predominately white (90.3%), with approximately one in ten (9.4%) participants indicating that they were from a minority ethnic community (including Irish Travellers)[19]. In terms of disability, a small group indicated that they had a disability (12.9%), while 6.0% were unsure. Of note, the percentage of young people who reported they were from a minority ethnic group or had a disability is substantially higher than those found in the NI Census (2021 NI Census 3.4% minority ethnic population; 2011 NI Census[20] 2.7% 15-19 year olds and 3.1% 20 to 24 year olds reporting a disability). In addition, 14.2% of the participants (one in seven) indicated that they were a carer for someone they lived with who was sick or elderly or who had a disability. In addition to self-reported demographics, young people were asked to provide the first half of their home postcode (e.g. BT1, BT2 etc.) or the name of the town, village or townland where they lived. This data was used to create a Google Map (Figure 21) of participant's locations (n = 2,030)[21]. The map demonstrates the coverage of enrolment in the Programme across the eligible regions of Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

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[19] Of those individuals identifying that they were from a minority ethnic background, 0.1% Chinese, 1.4% Black, 0.2% Indian, 0.5% Portuguese, 0.8% Polish, 0.2% Romanian, 0.4% Lithuanian, 0.5% Irish Traveller, 3.1% some other ethnicity, and 2.3% mixed background.

[20] At the time of this report, data from the 2021 NI Census phase 1 statistics released did not include data on disability or carer status. This information is due to be released shortly and will be added when available.

[21] Participants sometimes included their Eircode if living in the Republic of Ireland, but as Eircodes identify a specific address, only the towns/villages indicated from the Eircodes were included in the dataset that was used to create the map to maintain anonymity.

Figure 21.

Phase II Map of Participant's Locations
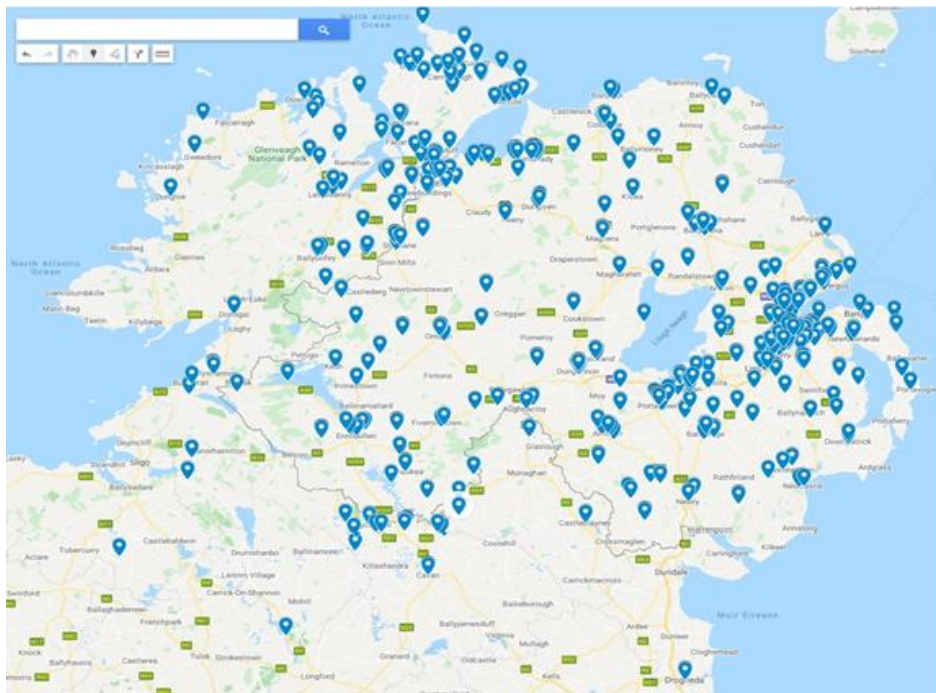
Young people's home locations were congregated in urban settings with high populations. The map suggests, however, that there are potentially gaps in coverage in the Glens area of Antrim and in parts of Monaghan, Louth and Leitrim in the Republic of Ireland. As the map has been created from self-report data, it is difficult to know whether these gaps reflect a systematic gap in the provision or a systematic gap in the evaluation data.

Overall Distance Travelled on Outcome Indicators

Below we outline the distance travelled for the three outcome areas – Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship – as explained by statistically significant change on each of the outcome indicators over time. As discussed previously, progression on each of the outcome indicators are measured by differences in the mean scores between the time points as captured by one or more psychometrically validated scales. While differences on each of the scales are important and will be discussed in turn, the outcome indicators, and the scales used to measure them, are then used to inform the broader outcome areas; as such, it is the overall change across the outcome indicators that is critical to focus on.

Good Relations

Overall, there is clear evidence of positive distance travelled in terms of the Good Relations outcome area, indicating that young people had enhanced their capacity to form positive and effective

relationships with young people from a different background than themselves; including those from the other community, a different jurisdiction, and from other ethnic backgrounds. Statistically, **all indicators** under the Good Relations umbrella showed statistically significant change in the desired direction.

The magnitude of the changes varied substantially. The biggest positive changes (medium in statistical terms), in order of their reported strength, were observed for:

- Quantity of contact with young people from the other community (Catholic/Protestant) during project activity
- Quantity of contact with young people who are asylum seekers and refugees during project activity
- Understanding of own identity
- Awareness and understanding of the beliefs of others
- Quality of contact with young people from the other community (Catholic/Protestant) during project activity
- Attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees

General Attitudes and Behaviours. In terms of the outcome indicators related to more general attitudes and behaviours, and the scales used to assess these, there were statistically significant positive changes for:

- Respect for diversity
- Awareness and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of others
- More positive family outgroup norms (e.g. encouragement by family to make friends from the other community)
- Future behavioural intentions to develop and sustain outgroup friendships
- Understanding of their own identity (the size of the change here was medium (in a scale of small to large), and was also found to be significantly related to the length of time a young person spent in their project)

The magnitude of change for the indicator, understanding of own identity, was medium and was found to be significantly related to the length of time a young person spent in the project. This means that the longer the person was involved with the project the "bigger" the positive change in understanding of own identity.

Figures 22-25 include a graphical representations of the distance travelled for the good relations measures. All measures used a similar 5-point Likert scale and the average score for each survey

are shown below. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 22.

Phase II Good Relations – Distance Travelled General Attitudes and Behaviours

Attitudes and Behaviours Towards the "Other" Community. For those outcome indicators specific to attitudes and behaviours related to the other community, and the scales used to assess these, there were significant positive changes for:

- Frequency of contact with young people from the other community during project activities
- Quality of contact with young people from the other community during project activities
- Frequency of contact with young people from the other community outside of project activities
- Quality of contact with young people from the other community outside of project activities
- Frequency of online contact with young people from the other community
- Feelings of anxiety during intergroup interactions
- Number of close friends from the other community
- Feelings of closeness to friends from the other community
- Attitudes towards those from the other community
- Prosocial behaviours towards members of the other community

It should be noted that for both the frequency and quality of contact with young people from the other community during project activities, the effect size can be considered medium. This is an anomaly in the contact literature where meta-analyses indicate that effect sizes tend to be in the small range (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This is also true for studies conducted in Northern Ireland, with a

recent 5-year longitudinal study of intergroup contact experienced through the shared education programme revealed a small effect size (Reimer, Hughes, Blaylock, & Hewstone, 2022). Further, the effect was significantly related to the length of time the young person spent in their project; such that, the longer the young person spent in the project the greater the effect magnitude of the change.

Figure 23.

Phase II Good Relations – Distance Travelled Cross-Community Attitudes and Behaviours
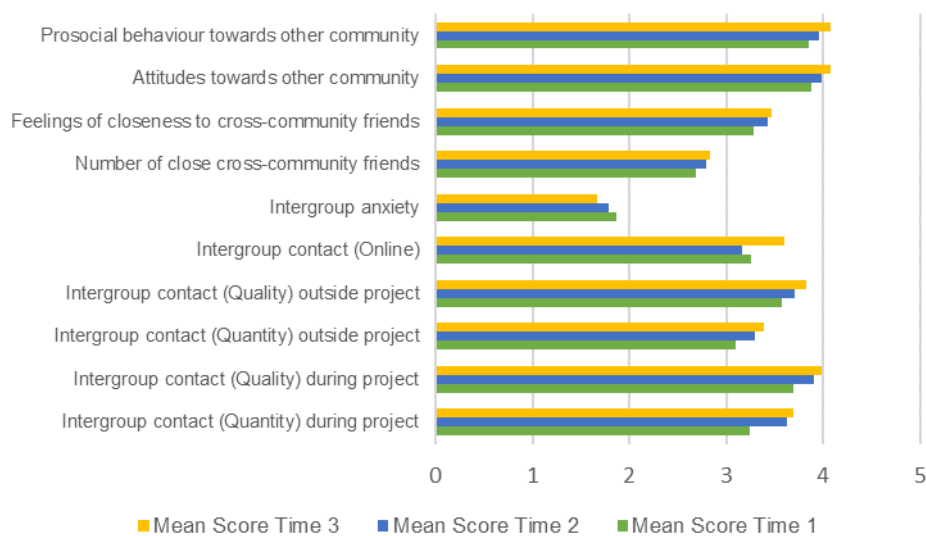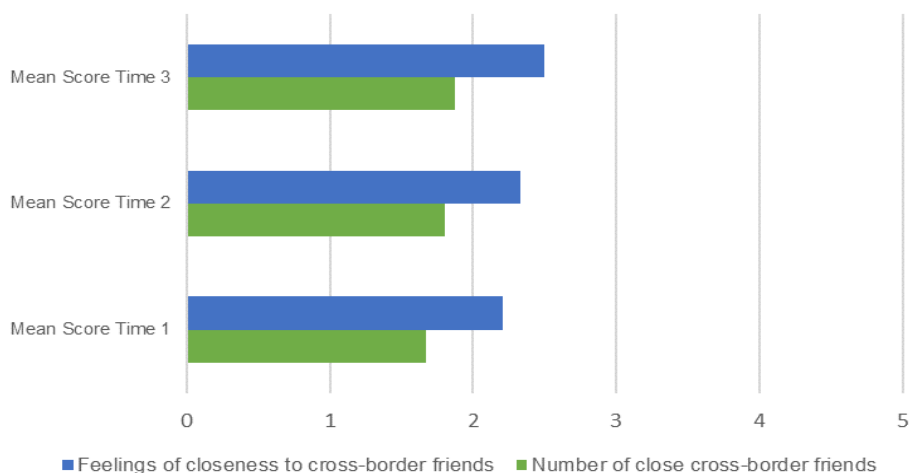

Cross-Border Attitudes and Behaviours. For outcome indicators specific to cross-border relations, and the scales used to assess them, there were significant positive changes for:

- Number of cross-border close friends
- Perceived cross-border friendship closeness

Figure 24.

Phase II Good Relations – Distance Travelled Cross-Border Attitudes and Behaviours

Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Minority Ethnic Groups. Finally, in terms of those outcome indicators related to attitudes and behaviours towards members of minority ethnic groups, and the scales used to assess them, there were positive changes for:

- Greater frequency of contact with individuals from minority ethnic groups
- Greater quality of contact with individuals from minority ethnic groups
- Greater frequency of contact with individuals from the Irish Traveller community
- Greater quality of contact with individuals from the Irish Traveller community
- Greater frequency of contact with individuals who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Greater quality of contact with individuals who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Attitudes towards young people from minority ethnic groups
- Attitudes towards young people from the Irish Traveller community
- Attitudes towards young people who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Number of close friends from other ethnic groups
- Feelings of closeness to friends from other ethnic groups

Figure 25.

Phase II Good Relations – Distance Travelled Minority Ethnic Attitudes and Behaviours
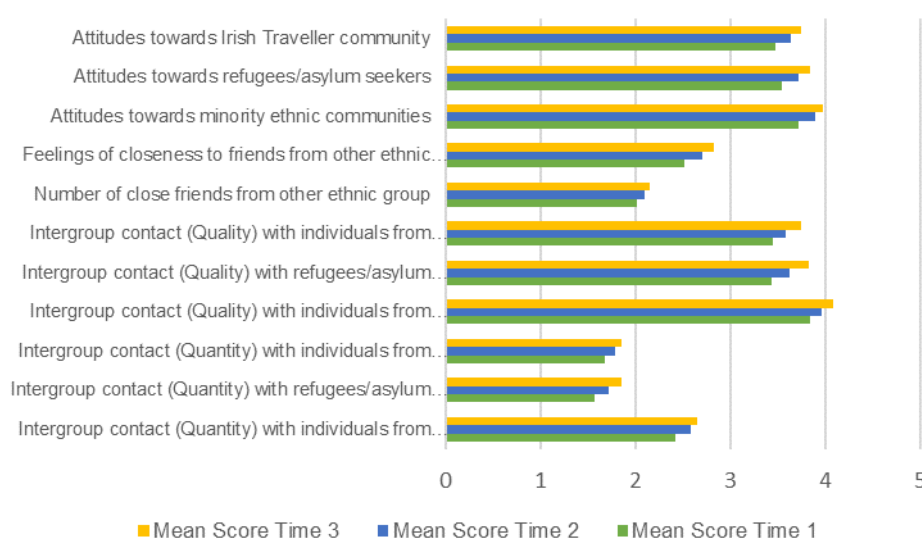
Personal Development

Analysis of the scales measuring the personal development outcome indicators suggest positive distance travelled on **all indicators**. Of particular note is the size of the observed effects with the majority of the effects a medium and for self-efficacy large. Furthermore, significant positive changes occurred throughout young people's involvement: between Times 1 and 2 (baseline and mid-point); between Times 2 and 3 (mid-point and end-point); and/or change occurred gradually between Time

1 and Time 3 (baseline and end of project involvement). These changes were all significant regardless of the duration of a project (whether 5, 6, 7 months etc.).

The biggest positive changes (medium-large in statistical terms) in order of their reported strength, were observed for:

- Stronger agency in terms of self-efficacy
- Stronger self-esteem
- Stronger self-confidence
- Stronger self-awareness and understanding of the self
- Stronger resilience and determination
- Stronger feelings of agency in their community/feelings of empowerment

Figure 26 includes a graphical representation of the distance travelled for the personal development measures. All measures used a similar 5-point Likert scale and the average score for each survey are shown below. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 26.

Phase II Personal Development Distance Travelled

Citizenship

Positive progression was evident on the majority, but not all, of the outcome indicators related to the citizenship outcome area, and these changes were small-medium in size. Specifically, there were significant positive changes for:

- Participation in democratic processes and structures;
- Participating in volunteering/voluntary activity;
- Civic engagement (engagement with useful services);
- Support for peacebuilding;
- General prosocial behaviours;
- Helping behaviours towards their own community;
- Positive attitude towards their own community
- Positive relationships within their own community.

The largest effect sizes were observed for participation in the democratic process, participation in volunteering and voluntary activity, and engagement with useful services. Further, the change in these three indicators was significant throughout the lifespan of a project – from Time 1 to 2, from Time 2 to 3, and overall from Time 1 to Time 3. Changes in civic engagement were associated with the length of time a young person spent in their project; such that, the longer the person was engaged in the project, the greater the change. Significant change was not evident for a reduction in sectarian behaviour or antisocial behaviour.

Figure 27 includes a graphical representations of the distance travelled for the citizenship measures. All measures used a similar 5-point Likert scale and the average score for each survey are shown below. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 27.

Phase II Citizenship Distance Travelled
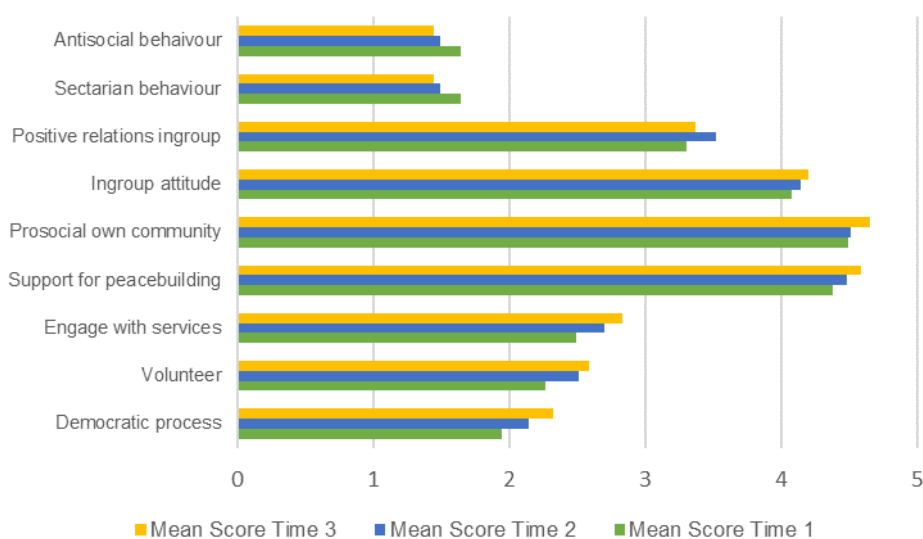
Qualifications and Progression

Participants who completed the Time 3 survey were asked to indicate what their intentions were upon finishing their PEACE IV project, and whether they had obtained any qualifications during the course of their involvement in the programme. For Phase II, the three most popular destinations upon leaving PEACE4Youth projects are:

- Paid work (30.8%)
- AS, A Levels or Leaving Cert (24.5%)
- GCSEs/Junior Cert (23.9%)

Findings indicate that individuals noting what their progression plans were following their time within the PEACE4Youth project related to moving into or preparing for paid work or moving on to additional education, either in the form of certifications, enrolment in Further Education Colleges, or other college or university courses. It is worth noting that a similar number of individuals indicated that they would be moving on to another youth project or were not sure of their next steps.

Phase II leavers reported that they obtained qualifications in a core area of programme activity (Personal Development, Good Relations, or Citizenship) during their time in their PEACE IV4Youth project; particularly in the areas of Personal Development and Good Relations more so than Citizenship.

Figure 28.

Phase II Progression Destinations of Participants at the End of their PEACE4Youth Projects
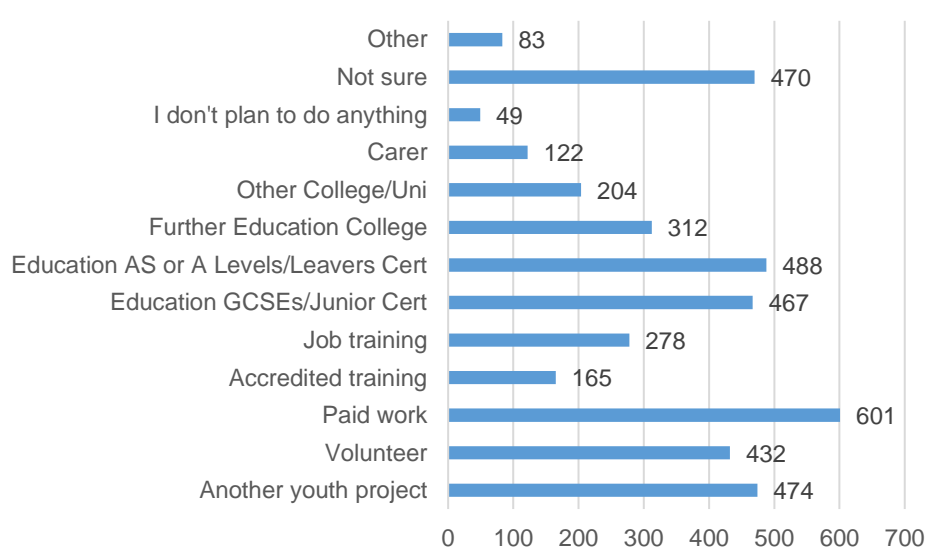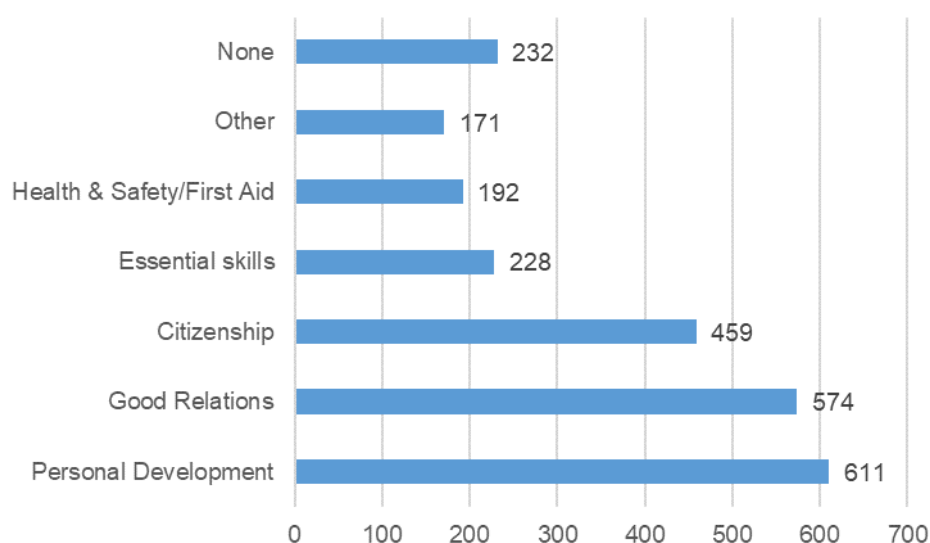
Figure 29.

Phase II Accreditations Achieved by Participants by the End of their PEACE4Youth Projects

Summary

Across the three outcome areas, the overwhelming majority of outcome indicators showed evidence of positive distance travelled over the course of Phase II. Moving towards the objective of enhancing the capacity of children and young people to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background and make a positive contribution to building a cohesive society, young people have developed. For the majority of indicators, the length of time of different projects from baseline to end-point had no significant influence on the distance travelled. Where the PEACE4Youth projects appears to be showing limited reach is in regard to those psychological constructs related to behavioural outcomes. For example, no change was found in regard to participation in sectarian behaviours and participation in antisocial behaviours.

Result Indicators

Below we present an evaluation of the result indicators compared against the Young Life and Times Survey and direct participation in the PEACE4Youth Programme.

Socialise and/or Play Sport

Results derived from the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey showed that 58% of 16-year-olds socialised and/or played sports with people from a different religious community (30% 'very often', 28% 'sometimes'). This is significantly **lower** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline (2013) of 67% (43% 'very often, 24% "sometimes') as well as the 2023 target of 78% anticipated by the Programme-

level theory of change (50% 'very often, 25% 'sometimes'). While the 2023 'very often' target of 50% is not yet met, the 28% 'sometimes' target is currently being met.

Due to an error with the Phase II dataset, this measure was not collected from young people participating in PEACE4Youth projects. However, data exploring the extent to which participants had both face-to-face and online interactions with members of the other community were. When asked to what extent they socialised and/or played sport with people from a different community as their own, young people who had participated in PEACE4Youth indicating that the majority of participants indicated that they sometimes, often, or very often (68%) interacted with young people from a different community background than themselves. This figure is slightly **higher** than the baseline group derived of 16-year-olds completing the 2013 Young Life and Times Survey who indicated that they very often or sometimes socialised and/or played sports with young people from a different religious community (67%) but **lower** than the 2023 target of 78% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

Relations Better Now than 5-years ago

Results derived from the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey indicated that 37% of 16 year olds felt that relations were better now than 5-years ago. This is **lower** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline (2013) rate of 45% as well as the 2023 target rate of 50% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

When asked whether they believed that relations between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities are better now than they were five years ago, 62% of young people who had participated in PEACE4Youth felt that relations were better. This is **higher** than both the PEACE IV Programme baseline (2013) of 45% as well as the 2023 target value of 50% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

Relations Will Be Better in 5-years

Results derived from the 2022 Young Life and Times Survey indicated that 37% of 16 year olds felt that relations will be better in five years' time. This is **lower** than the PEACE IV Programme baseline (2013) rate of 38% as well as the 2023 target rate of 45% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

Similarly, when asked whether they believed that relations between members of the Protestant and Catholic communities will better in five years, 60% of young people who had participated in PEACE4Youth felt that relations will be better. This is **higher** than the PEACE IV Programme

baseline (2013) of 38% as well as the 2023 target value of 45% anticipated by the Programme-level theory of change.

CHAPTER 8: Phase II Survey Subgroup Findings

In this chapter, we present findings for subgroup populations from whom data was collected as part of the evaluation of the programme. First, an overview of the findings from Early Leavers will be presented, following by the distance-travelled for young people who completed the illustrated version of the evaluation survey. This survey was developed in conjunction with Mencap staff for use with young people who had learning difficulties or who had literacy difficulties. The illustrated version was also translated for use with young people who spoke Arabic as their first language.

In the rest of the chapter we present significant differences in distance-travelled (across the three evaluation time points) that were observed between subgroups within the dataset. These subgroups were based upon background and contextual information gathered from the young people's surveys or from cohort information supplied by projects. Mixed analysis of variance (Mixed ANOVA) tests were then used to ascertain whether changes in the outcome measures over time were significantly different for the following different subgroups:

- Community background (Catholic and Protestant)
- Gender (female and male);
- Age group (14-17 year olds; 18-24 year olds)
- School-based cohort or community-based cohort
- Participants' Jurisdiction – Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland
- Participants' location – rural or urban

Early Leavers

Participants who left their PEACE4Youth project before the intended completion date are invited to complete an 'Early Exit' impact evaluation survey within two weeks of their finish date. The survey asks participants to state what they are planning to do upon leaving their PEACE4Youth project; whether they had obtained any qualifications during their time in the programme; how much they enjoyed the programme activities; and their main reason for leaving. The following results are a summary of the findings for 65 early leavers from Phase II.

Future Plans

Looking at Table 6, it can be seen that a very small percentage of leavers reported that they did not plan to do anything upon leaving their project (3.1%), and just over one-fifth (21.5%) were not sure what they were going to do. Two-fifths (40.0%) were planning to enter an education-based destination (either HE or FE or school-based course), and nearly half (46.2%) were planning to enter job training or paid work.

Table 6.

Phase II Destinations of Early Leavers (Number and Overall Percentage)

Destination Type	N	Overall (%)
Another youth/community project	6	9.2%
Voluntary work	7	10.8%
Paid work	26	40.0%
Accredited training (OCN/FETAC)	1	1.5%
Job training/apprenticeship/internship	4	6.2%
GCSEs/Junior Cert	8	12.3%
As/A-Levels/Leaving Cert	13	20.0%
FE course	2	3.1%
HE course	3	4.6%
Caring for family member/friend	1	1.5%
Don't plan to do anything	2	3.1%
Not sure yet	14	21.5%
Other	1	1.5%

Qualifications and Accredited Training

The greatest proportion of qualifications obtained was in the core area of Personal Development (35.4%). Just under a third (29.3%) of early leavers achieved a qualification in a Good Relations area, and just under a quarter achieved a qualification in a Citizenship area (23.1%). About one in eight early leavers (12.3%) reported leaving with no qualifications obtained.

Table 7.

Phase II Qualification of Early Leavers (Numbers and Overall Percentage)

Qualification Type	N	Overall (%)
Personal Development area	23	35.4%
Good Relations area	19	29.2%
Citizenship area	15	23.1%
Essential Skills	12	18.5%
Health & Safety/First Aid	16	24.6%
Other	4	6.2%
None	8	12.3%

58 participants responded to the question about their enjoyment of the project they had been part of. The majority of early leavers enjoyed the project 'quite a lot' (30.8%) or 'very much' (32.3%). A further 7.7% reported being 'in the middle' about how much they enjoyed the project and 18.5% indicated that they only liked the project 'a little bit'.

Reasons for Early Exit

34 differing responses were given to the question about participants' main reasons for leaving early. The primary theme within the responses was related to commitment issues related to employment and/or school demands interfering with continued participation. A secondary theme evidence was related to financial issues; specifically, issues related to not receiving anticipated payments from the project. And finally, a third theme related to social and mental health issues. These responses highlighted the inability to remain within the programme due to a lack of confidence, anxiety problems, and/or perceived negative group dynamics within the cohort.

Together these responses indicate that a significant number of early leavers enjoyed their projects and had positive reasons for leaving their project early. The number of young people who answered that their lack of confidence/social anxiety was their main barrier to participation indicates that this is a key issue that may need particular focus from the outset of project activities. Clear communication regarding eligibility for payment and the time commitment involved may also be wider issues to consider.

Illustrated Survey

The illustrated survey was launched in April 2019, and during Phase II, there were only 14 young people who had matching data for all three time points. There were, however, 74 young people who had matching data from time 1 to time 2. As such, the following section outlines the distance travelled between time 1 and time 2 for this group of young people using a paired-samples t-test. A statistically significant improvement was found in the following indicators:

- Positive contact with young people from the other community (Catholic/Protestant)
- Number of close friends from a minority ethnic community
- Feelings of anxiety during intergroup interactions
- Feelings of self-confidence
- Reported leadership skills
- Reported help-seeking skills (marginal)

Potentially due to the small sample size and the limited time between time points, only a small number of indicators showed movement across the two time points. As such, these findings should be read with some degree of scepticism.

Figure 30 includes a graphical representations of the distance travelled across the outcome measures. All measures used a similar 5-point Likert scale and the average score for each survey are shown below. Unless otherwise noted, higher scores indicate a greater endorsement of the items used to measure the construct.

Figure 30.

Phase II Distance Travelled Illustrated Survey
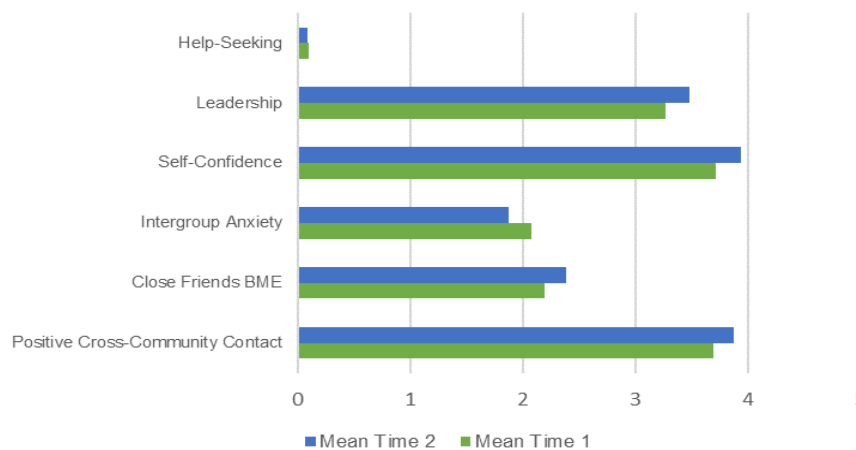
Subgroup Analyses

Below we present findings where significant differences were found between subgroups from the Core version of the survey. Each subgroup analysis is presented in turn.

Community Background[22]

For those completing three evaluation surveys, the sample size by community background was: Catholic background n = 309; Protestant background n = 149. Of all of subgroups analysed, community background showed the greatest number of differences across the indicators. Significant differences were found on the following indicators; however, the effect size is considered small:

- Respect for diversity
- Awareness and understanding of the beliefs of others
- Attitudes towards young people from minority ethnic groups

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[22] For the current analyses, only those who indicated that they were from the Catholic or Protestant community are included due to the heterogeneity within the "Other" category.

- Attitudes towards young people from the Irish Traveller community
- Attitudes towards young people who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Attitudes towards young people from the other community
- Number of close friends from other ethnic groups
- Future behavioural intentions to develop and sustain outgroup friendships
- Stronger feelings of agency in their community/feelings of empowerment
- Planning and problem solving
- Positive relations with peers
- Leadership
- Help-seeking intentions
- General prosocial behaviours
- Attitude towards their own community
- Helping behaviours towards their own community

Across each of the community relations indicators, a similar pattern of differences between the two groups emerged. For all young people, the distance travelled was positive from Time 1 to Time 3. For young people from the Catholic community we often see a higher Time 1 mean than for young people from the Protestant community. By Time 3, these differences have either disappeared or have switched, with young people from the Protestant community showing higher scores than young people from the Catholic community. In essence, while the starting point for young people from the Protestant community appears lower, their rate of change across the breadth of the programme is sharper. An example of this pattern is shown below with the indicator of respect for diversity.

Figure 31.

Phase II Good Relations – Respect for Diversity Distance Travelled by Community Background
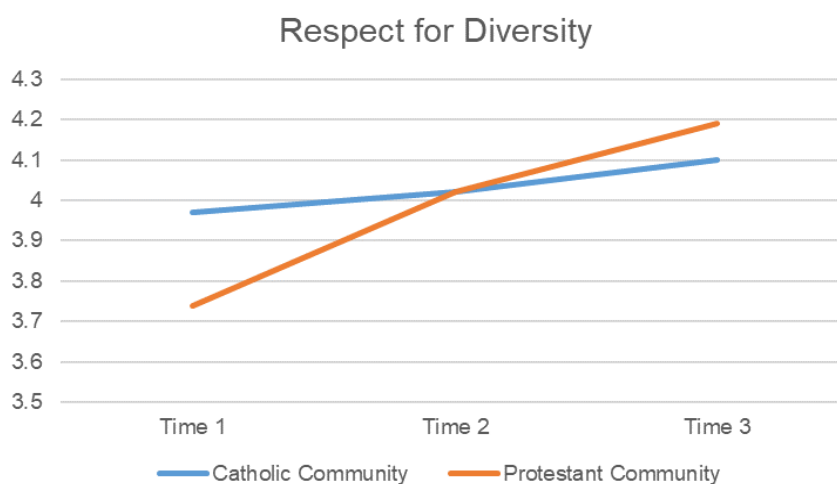
A similar pattern emerges across the majority, but not all, of the Personal Development indicators. With young people from the Catholic community, on average, starting out with a higher starting point at Time 1 but showing a slower, though still positive, incline than young people from the Protestant community. An example of this pattern is shown below with the indicator leadership skills.

Figure 32.

Phase II Personal Development – Leadership Skills Distance Travelled by Community Background
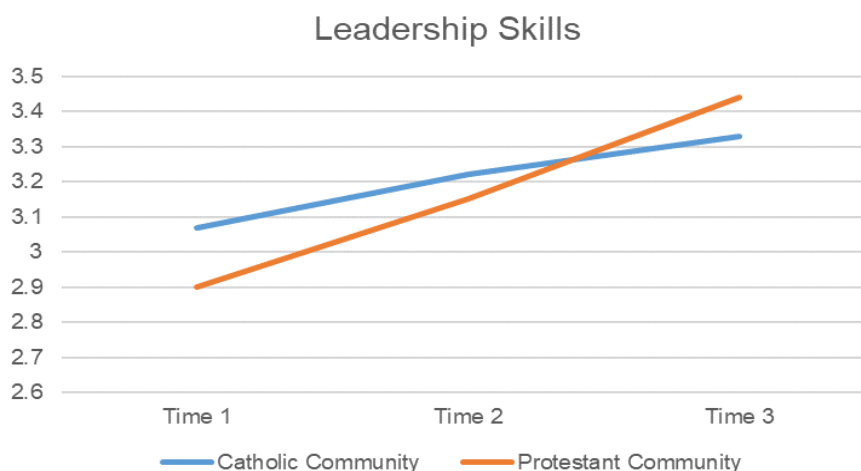
This was not the case, however, for feelings of agency and empowerment which showed a slightly different pattern. Here we see all young people starting out at a similar point, for the most part, at Time 1 and a plateau happening for young people from the Protestant community. While young people from the Catholic community show a steady incline across all three time points, it is only from Time 2 to Time 3 that we see a positive distance travelled for young people from the Protestant community.

Figure 33.

Phase II Personal Development - Sense of Agency and Empowerment by Community Background
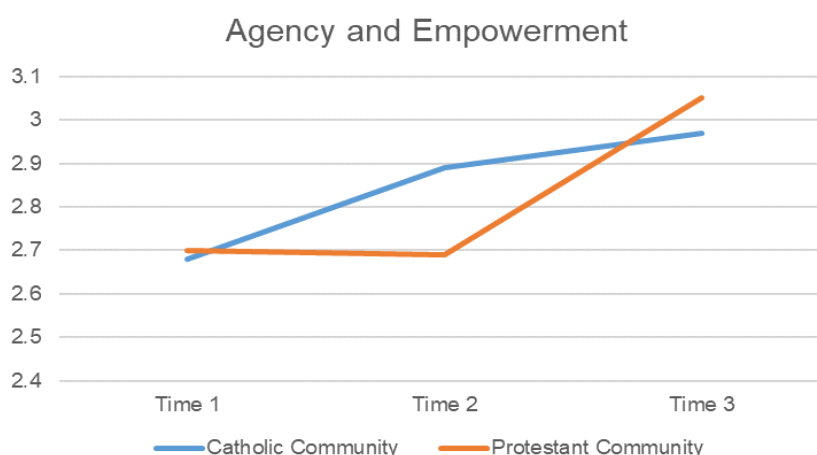
Finally, a consistent pattern emerges for all three citizenship indicators – general prosocial behaviours, ingroup attitudes, and prosocial behaviours towards the ingroup. Here we find a relative plateau or slight increase for young people from the Catholic community while a steady incline over time is evident for young people from the Protestant community. This patter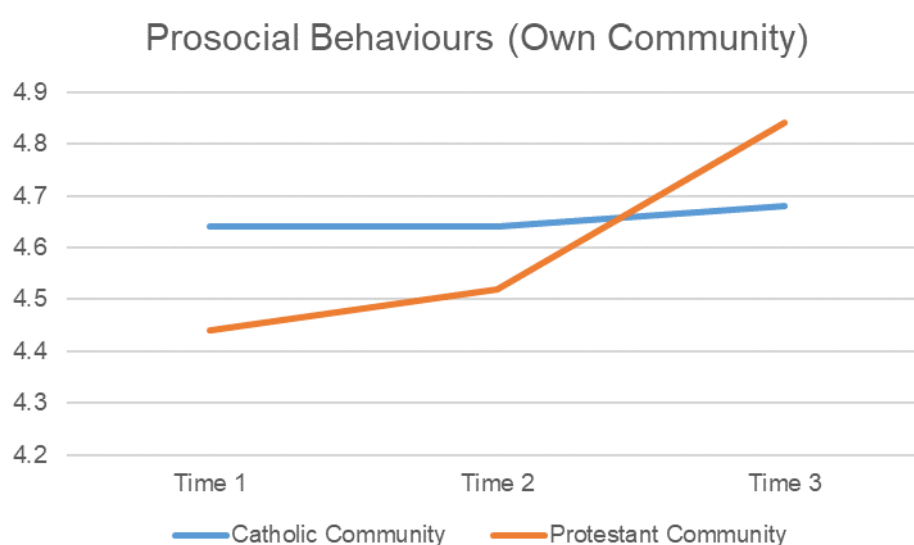n is show demonstrated below with the change over time for members of the Catholic and Protestant community in relation to prosocial behaviours towards own group.

Figure 34.

Phase II Citizenship – Prosocial Behaviours Towards Own Group by Community Background


Gender

The sample of those who completed three evaluation surveys was fairly evenly split by gender: the number of females was 317, and the number of males was 272. As there were only 6 young people who reported Other as their gender within the matched survey dataset, this sub-group sample was too small to include in analyses. Significant differences were only found on a small number of Citizenship indicators, however, the effect size is considered small:

- Participating in volunteering/voluntary activity
- Participation in democratic processes and structures (marginally significant)
- Civic engagement (engagement with useful services)
- Positive relations with own community (marginally significant)

Across these three indicators, a consistent pattern emerged whereby a steady increase was apparent for females across the three time points. For males, however, the rate of change between Time 1 and Time 2 significantly increased but did not between Time 2 and Time 3. This pattern is demonstrated below with civic engagement.

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Figure 35.

Phase II Citizenship – Civic Engagement Distance Travelled by Gender
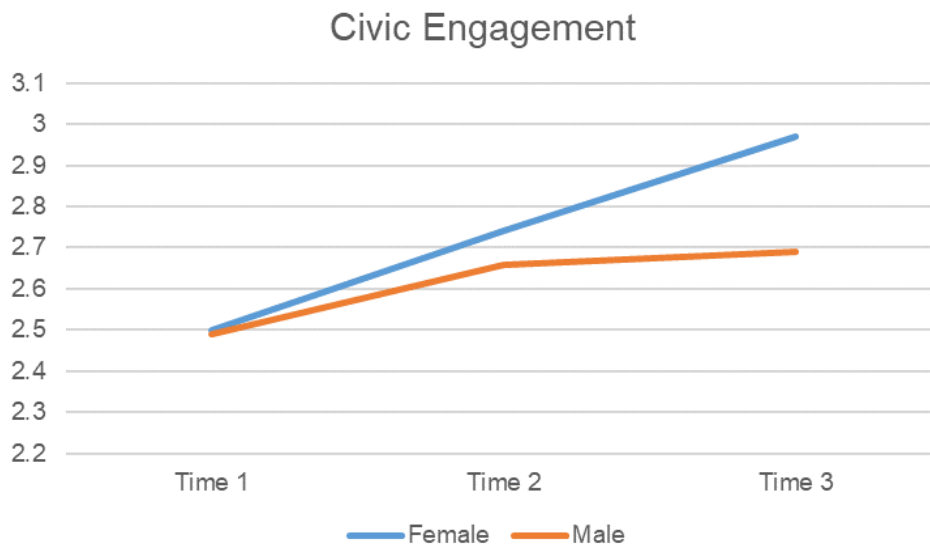
Age Group

For those completing three evaluation surveys, 403 were between the ages of 13 and 17, and 170 were between 18 and 25 years old. Significant differences were found on the following indicators; however, the effect size is considered small:

- Quality of contact with young people who are members of a minority ethnic community
- Attitudes towards their own community

For the quality of contact with young people who are members of a minority ethnic community, young people aged 13-17 years showed a steady distance travelled across the three time points. In comparison, young people aged 18-25 years showed no significant difference across the three time points. A similar pattern is evident for the difference in the two age groups on the indicator, attitudes towards own community. Again, we see a steady increase for our younger age group, and while it appears to be a decline at time 2, there is no significant change between all three time points for the older group.

Figure 36.

Phase II Community Relations – Quality of Contact with Members of a Minority Ethnic Community Distance Travelled by Age Group
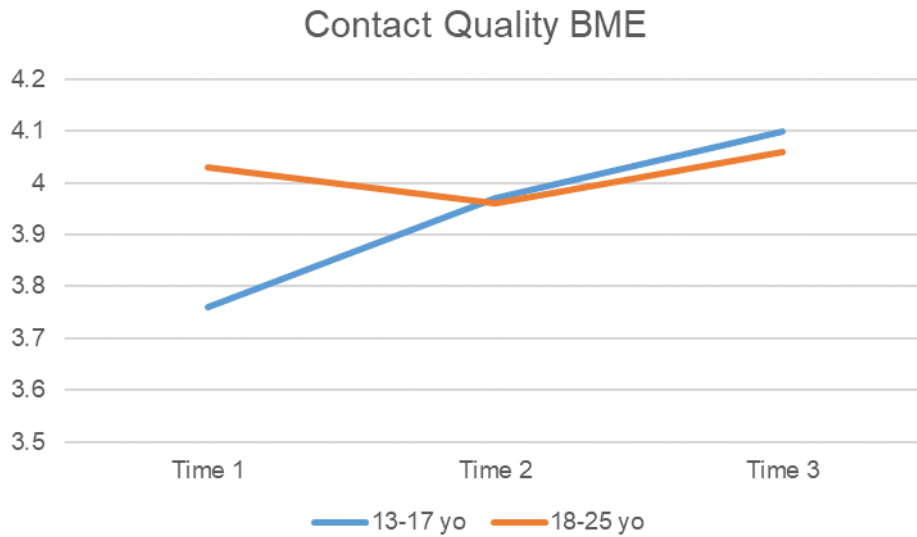
Figure 37.

Phase II Citizenship – Attitudes Towards Own Community Distance Travelled by Age Group
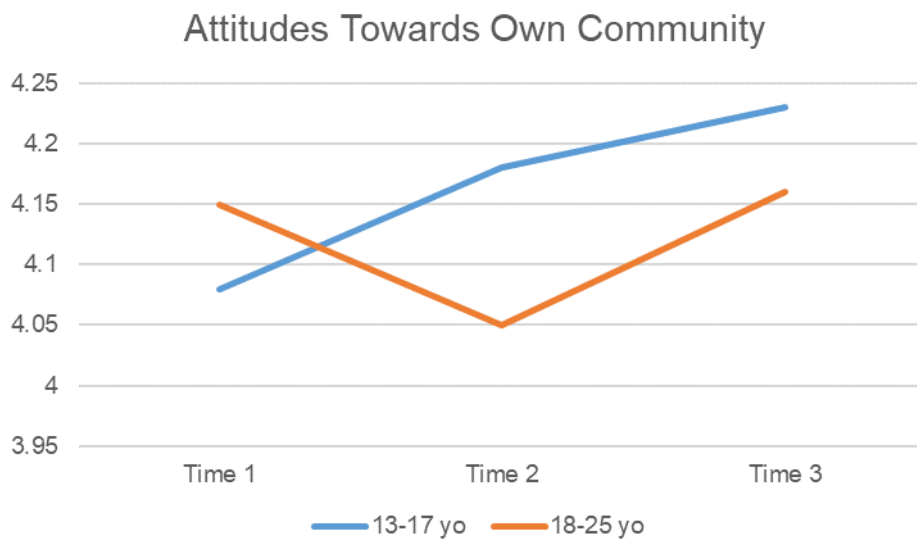
Jurisdiction

Within the dataset of participants who completed three matched evaluation surveys, the number from Northern Ireland was 605, and the number from the Republic of Ireland was 68. Significant differences were only found on a number of indicators; however, the effect size is considered small:

- Respect for diversity
- Understanding of own identity

- Contact quant outside
- Contact online
- Attitudes to travellers
- Attitudes to the other community
- Prosocial behaviours towards the other community (marginally significant)
- Self-awareness
- Self-esteem
- Agency/self-efficacy
- Help-seeking
- Ingroup attitudes

Among the differences found in the community relations all of the indicators showed a similar pattern in which, on average, young people from Northern Ireland started at a higher baseline but showed a slower rate of incline from Time 1 to Time 3 than young people from the Republic of Ireland. For these young people, while they may have started at a lower baseline, their distance travelled from Time 1 to Time 3 was greater. This is evident when exploring the distance travelled for each group on attitudes towards young people from the other community.

Figure 38.

Phase II Community Relations – Attitudes Towards Other Community Distance Travelled by Jurisdiction
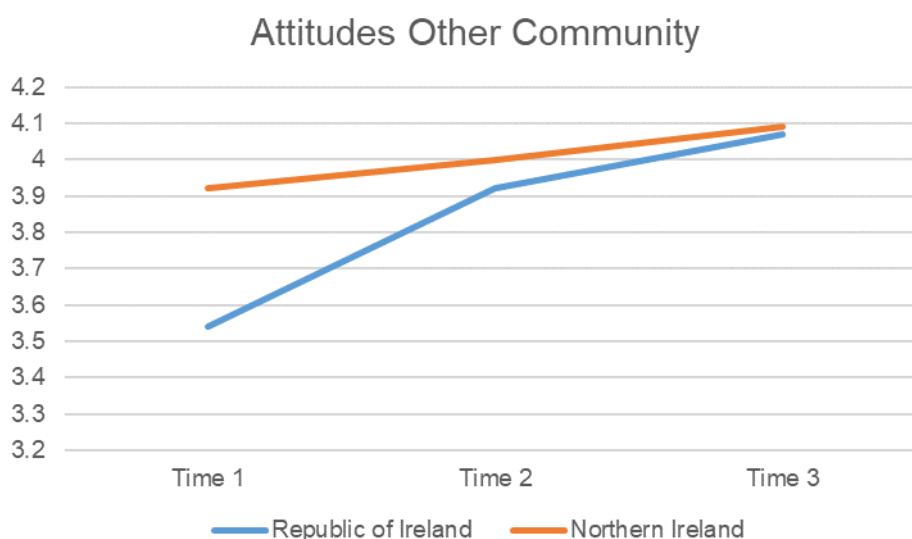
This pattern also evident across the personal development indicators, as shown below with the example of help-seeking behaviours.

Figure 39.

Phase II Personal Development – Help-Seeking Behaviours Distance Travelled by Jurisdiction
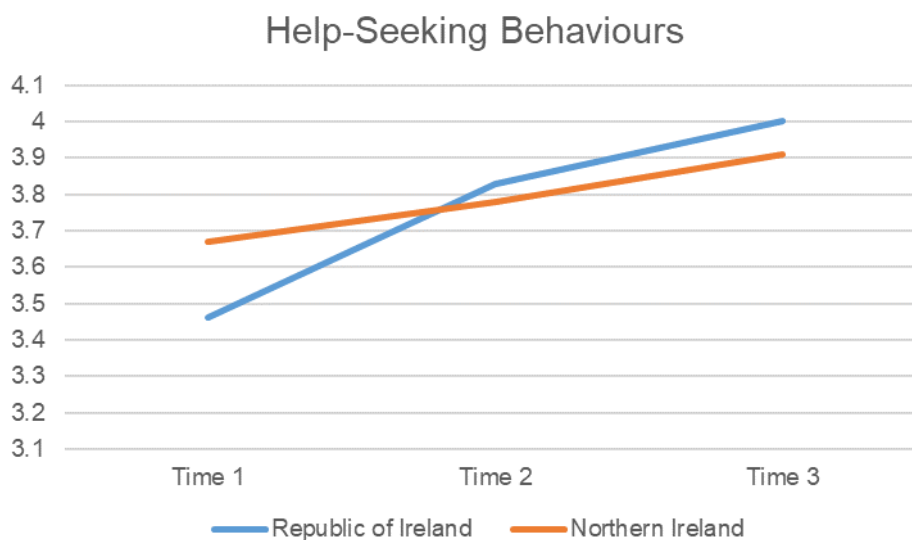
Further, the pattern emerged for the citizenship indicator of attitudes towards own community. For young people from Northern Ireland, on average, start out at a higher baseline their progression is flatter, while young people from the Republic of Ireland, on average, start out lower but show a sharper rate of increase from Time 1 to Time 3.

Figure 40.

Phase II Citizenship – Attitudes Towards Own Community Distance Travelled by Jurisdiction
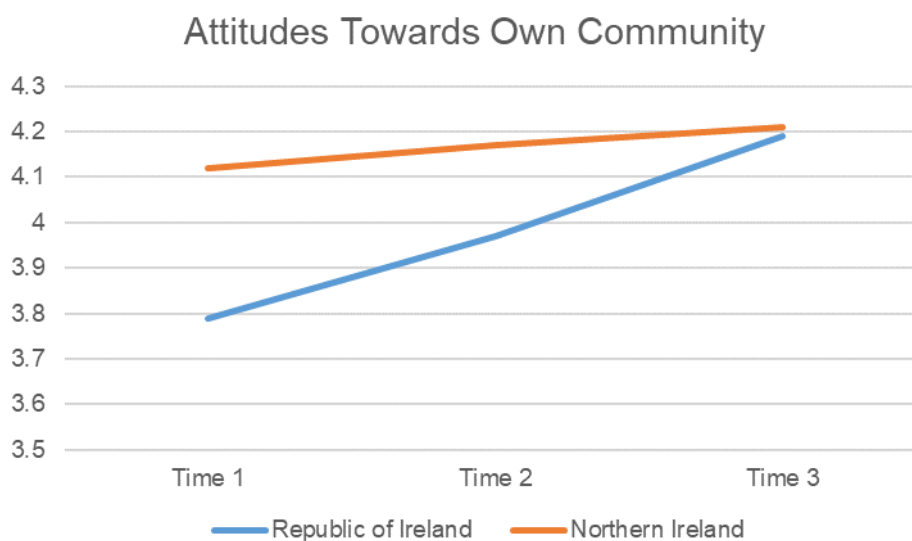
Location (Rural/Urban) [23]

Within the dataset, the sample of those from rural or urban locations who completed three matched evaluation surveys was as follows: rural n = 259; urban n = 294. Significant differences were found across the following measures, all of which showed small effect sizes:

- Frequency of contact with individuals who are refugees or asylum seekers
- Leadership skills
- Participating in volunteering/voluntary activity
- Participation in democratic processes and structures

For the community relations indicator, frequency of contact with young people who are refugees or asylum seekers, young people from both settings showed an increase over the three time points. However, for young people from urban settings, the increase from time 2 to time 3 was minimal and showed more of a plateau.

Figure 41.

Phase II Community Relations – Frequency of Contact with Refugees or Asylum Seekers Distance Travelled by Urban/Rural
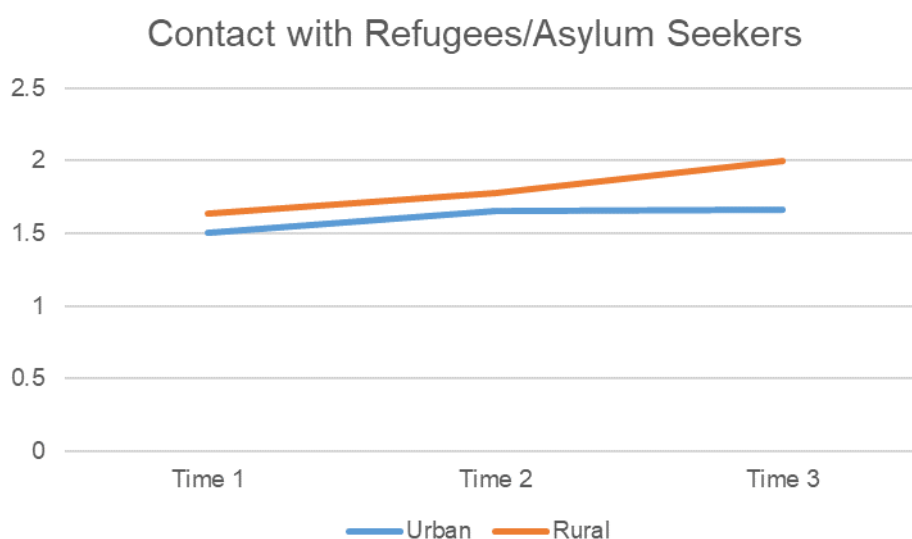
For the personal development indicator of increased leaderships, a differing pattern of results is displayed. Again, while all young people reported positive distance travelled over the three time points, for young people who reported that they were from an urban setting we see a sharper increase from time 1 to time 2 than we see from time 2 to time 3. The opposite is true for young

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[23] Location was determined based upon the respondent's postcode or stated area of residence. All participants with a Londonderry or Belfast postcode were coded as "Urban" with all other postcodes coded as "Rural".

people who reported that they were from a rural setting, here we find that a slower increase from time 1 to time 2 in comparison to the time 2 to time 3.

Figure 42.

Phase II Personal Development – Leadership Skills Distance Travelled by Urban/Rural
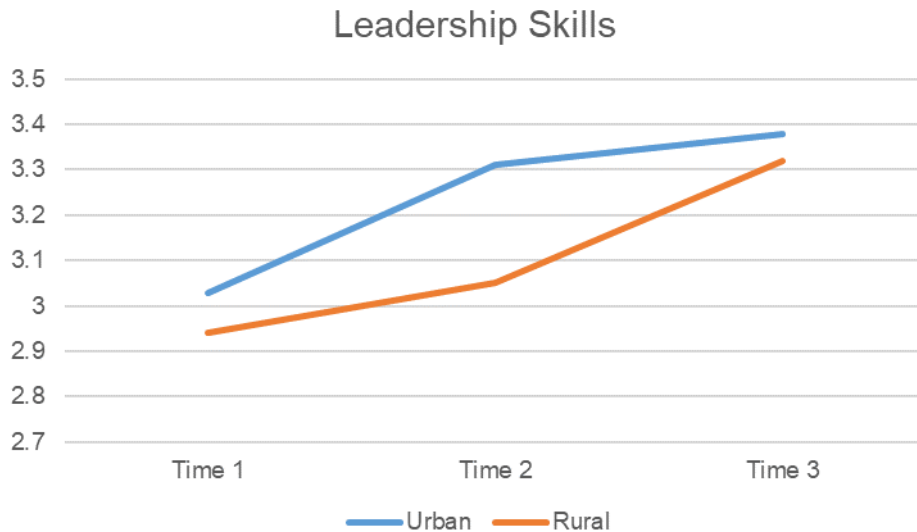
For the citizenship indicators of participation in volunteer and voluntary activities and participation in the democratic process, we see the reverse pattern from the personal development indicator. Here young people reporting that they were from a rural setting, showed a slower rate of change from time 1 to time 2 than from time 2 to time 3, while those reporting that they were from an urban setting showed a faster rate of increase from time 1 to time 2 than from time 2 to time 3.

Figure 43.

Phase II Citizenship – Volunteering Distance Travelled by Urban/Rural
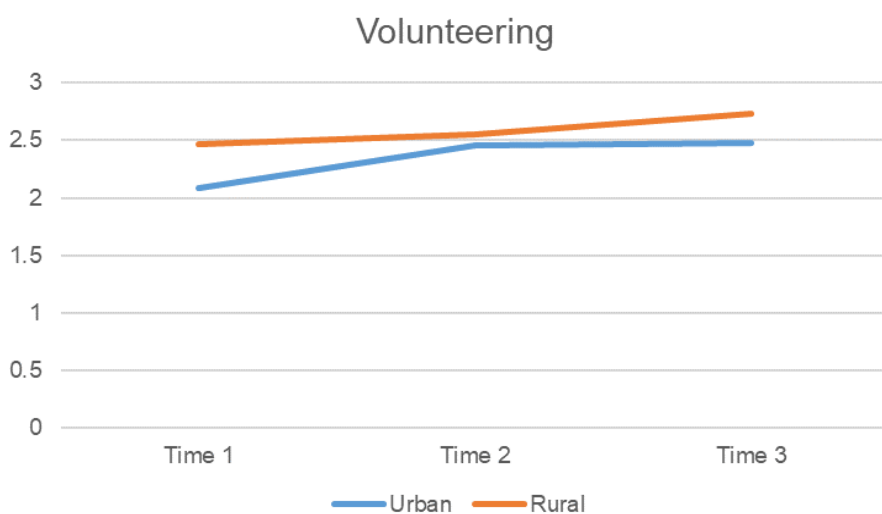
Figure 44.

Phase II Citizenship – Democratic Process Distance Travelled by Urban/Rural
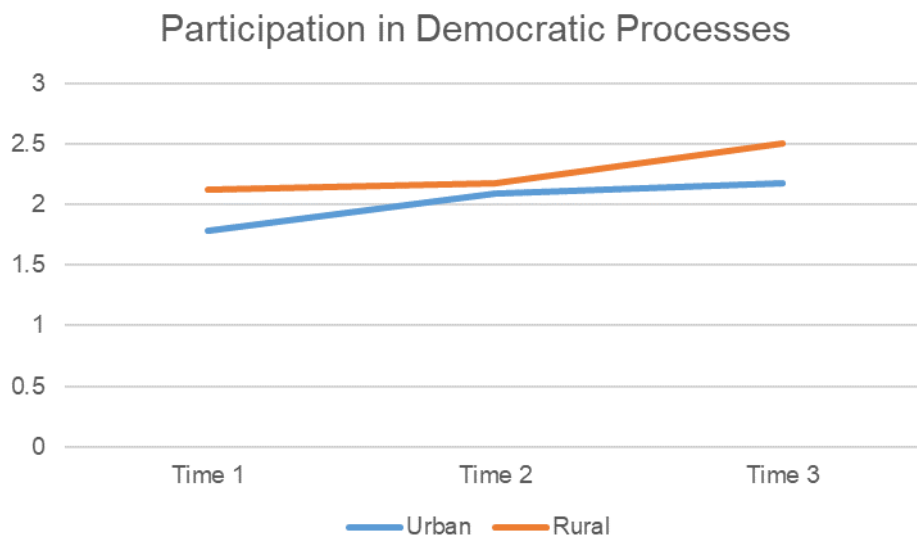
School or Community-Based Cohorts[24]

Using the dataset that had matched data across evaluation time points 1, 2 and 3, and additional cohort data received from the funded projects, the evaluation team identified 30 participants who attended school-based cohorts and 180 participants who attended community-based cohorts. This section outlines significant differences that were observed between these cohort types. Significant differences were evident across the following indicators, all of which were small effect sizes:

- Frequency of contact with young people who are from a minority ethnic community
- Feelings of agency in their community/feelings of empowerment
- Leadership skills
- Help-seeking skills
- Participation in sectarian behaviour

For the good relations indicator, those in community-based cohorts reported a significantly higher frequency of contact with minority ethnic groups than those in school-based cohorts. Rates of contact increased for both cohort types; however, the rate was steeper for school-based cohorts.

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[24] School or community-based cohort was determined by using group cohort information uploaded by key youth workers. However, the latest group cohort profile uploaded was from 2020 therefore data presented here are from the Phase II mid-term report.

Figure 45.

Phase II Good Relations – Frequency of Contact Minority Ethnic Community Distance Travelled by Cohort Type
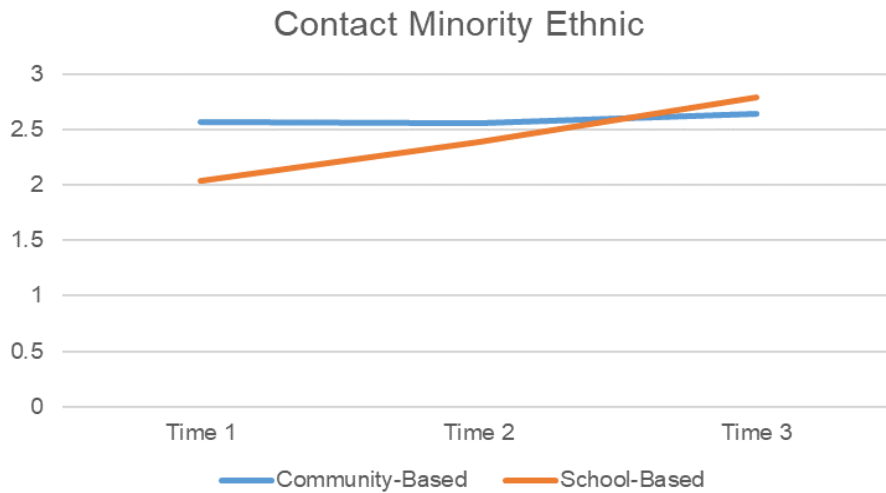
For the personal development indicators three patterns were evident. First, young people who attended school-based cohorts reported significantly higher mean scores for feelings of agency/empowerment in their community at all three time points those young people who attended community-based cohorts.

Figure 46.

Phase II Personal Development – Agency/Empowerment Distance Travelled by Cohort Type
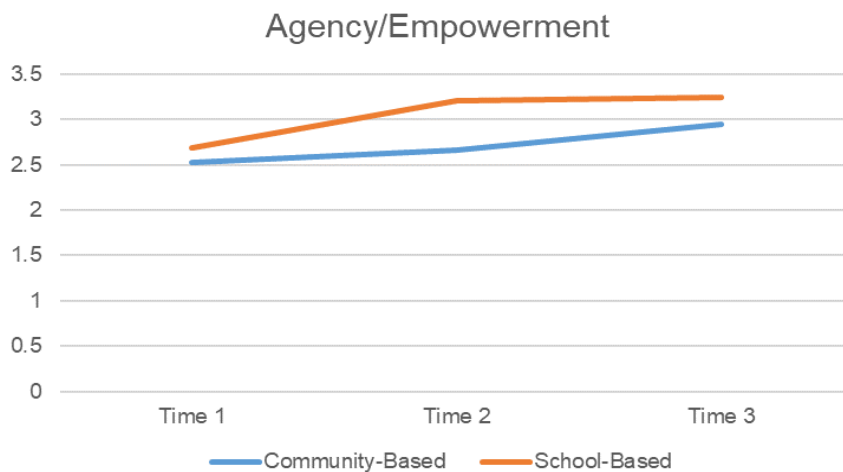
Second, young people in community-based cohorts reported a higher mean level of leadership skills at baseline than young people in school-based cohorts, but young people in school-based cohorts

showed a greater rate of positive change over time, with their mean score overtaking the mean score for community cohorts at Time 2 and staying significantly higher at Time 3.

Figure 47.

Phase II Personal Development – Leadership Skills Distance Travelled by Cohort Type
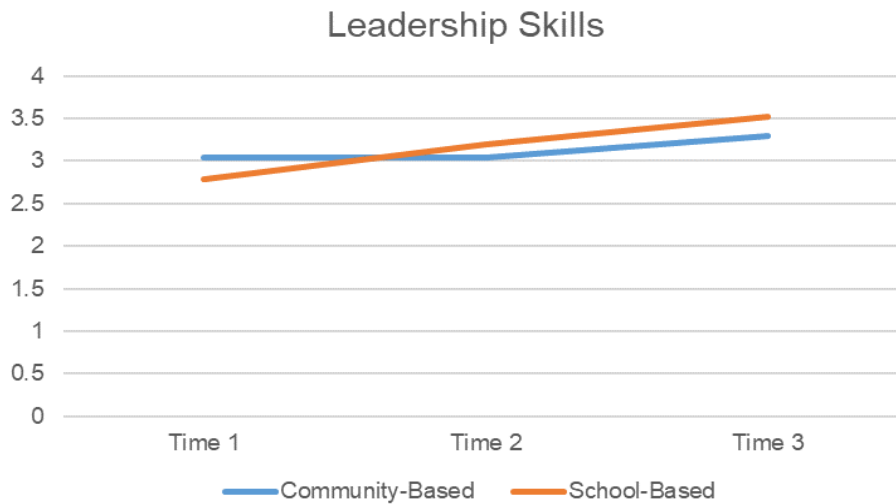
Finally, those in community-based cohorts reported a significantly higher mean level of help-seeking skills at baseline than those in school-based cohorts. Reported levels increased across the timeframe of the programme for both cohort types, but the rate of increase was steeper for school-based cohorts, such that their reported mean level of help-seeking skills was higher than community-based cohorts by Time 3.

Figure 48.

Phase II Personal Development – Help Seeking Skills Distance Travelled by Cohort Type
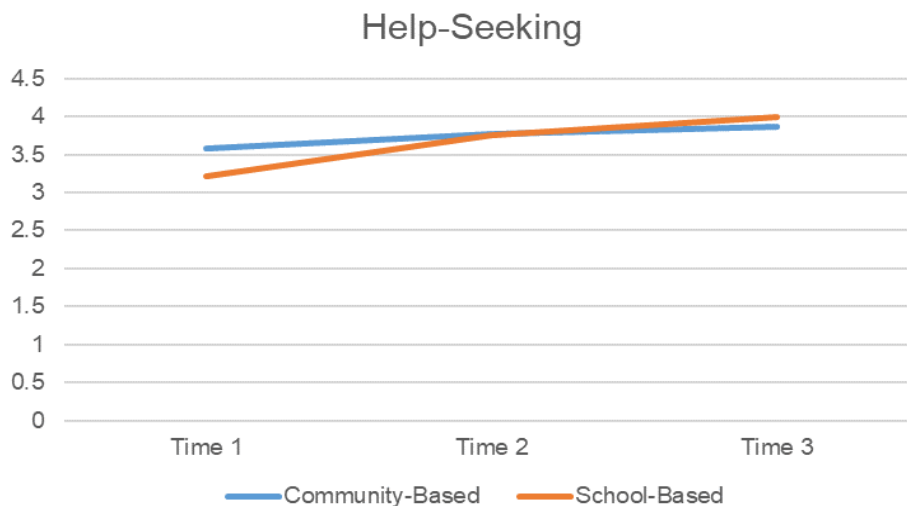
For the citizenship indicator, participation in sectarian behaviour, the school-based cohorts shows a significant decrease in sectarian behaviour decreased overall across the timeframe of the programme. Those who attended school-based cohorts however showed a significantly higher rate of participation at baseline, and a steeper rate of decrease in their participation in sectarian behaviour by Time 2. Both cohort types reported almost the same level of participation in sectarian behaviour at Time 3. There was no significant difference for those who attended a community-based cohort.

Figure 49.

Phase II Citizenship – Sectarian Behaviour Distance Travelled by Cohort Type

Summary

Matched data for those young people who completed all three time-points of the survey revealed several key differences based upon community background, gender, age group, cohort type, and participation location (rural/urban and Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland). These differences could be explained by several factors, including developmental reasons, contextual reasons (e.g., if surveys were completed at times of high tension in local communities), or heightened levels of self-awareness and self-reflection as participants spent time on their projects. Statistical analyses showed however that the relative magnitude of these differences between groups was small in statistical terms; as such, the importance of these differences should be considered accordingly.

PART IV: FACTORS

IMPACTING PROJECT

ACTIVITY

CHAPTER 9: Phase I: Focus Group Findings

Theme 1: Challenges in Project Initiation

In relation to the challenges that practitioners encountered during the project initiation stage, three key sub-themes emerged.

Competition with other Non-Governmental and Governmental Programmes

The first sub-theme focuses on difficulties due to competition with other non-governmental and governmental programmes. Several youth workers mentioned the overlap and incompatibility with Steps 2 Success as one of the stumbling blocks they encountered. There was frustration that a young person would not be able to enrol in an intensive support project like one of the PEACE4Youth projects while they were enrolled in a lower-intensity programme such as Steps 2 Success. In addition, some youth workers mentioned difficulties with receiving information from Jobs & Benefits offices in relation to when a young person would be starting or stopping Steps 2 Success, and as a result they didn't know if they could recruit a young person onto their project, which caused delays and young people missing out on the early stages of group development work. In another example, a youth worker described how one participant had started on the project but had to leave because they were mandated to start Steps 2 Success.

This sub-theme also included challenges identifying appropriate partners as well as too many organisations recruiting for the same target group in the same area.

> *"[I] realised how heavily saturated this city is with PEACE funding and it's like, well, you can't be on that programme because you're already on that programme."*

Financial incentives were reported by some as unnecessary, as youth workers reported that some young people wanted to participate regardless of incentive, for others it was reported as beneficial, and for a smaller group it was reported that it was irrelevant if the project was of a poor quality, *"£8 a day is not going to keep them"*. Youth workers consistently mentioned, however, that the lack of incentive for young people from the Republic of Ireland made it particularly difficult to attract participants. As one focus group participant stated,

> *"We're competing with other agencies that do offer an incentive, so you have to compete with them and it just makes it very difficult."*

This issue was most pronounced during cross-border activities when inequalities were made cognisant to the young people. As one youth worker reported in regards to young people from the Republic of Ireland, *"they're like, how come they're getting a payment and we're not?"* The same issue was mentioned by other youth workers who reported that when younger project participants who weren't eligible to receive the incentive (14/15 years old) learned of the existence of incentives, it caused a rift in the relationship they had formed with them – in one case, young people thought the youth worker had been withholding the payment from them, and a lot of sensitivity was required to handle the issue.

In addition to the recruitment of young people, it was highlighted that organisations were trying to recruit staff at the same time with similar skillsets, leading to competition between them,

> *"I think it's made it dog eat dog…and it shouldn't be because we're all in the one, we're in it for the one reason, we just want young people to develop and get what they need out of the programmes."*

Beyond recruitment issues, challenges were highlighted regarding collaboration between partnerships. As there was a high need for coordination between partner organisations when setting up the programme, this presented a challenge when different partner organisations had different ideas about how to weave the three themes of the PEACE IV Programme into the project or had different expectations for the project. As one focus group participant stated,

> *"It's then negotiating; me starting, what's the expectations, and what do both organisations need, because I'm obligated as part of [my organisation] to do the good relations work, but I also then, under the tender, have community relations, development, so I have to navigate between staff skills… there's a lot of communication goes on."*

Recruitment Criteria

The second sub-theme was challenges associated with the recruitment criteria. This included difficulties recruiting a balanced cohort of young people given the demographics of particular geographical areas, age restrictions, and a bipartite system of social categorisation and community identification that a number of young people felt restricted by. Further, several youth workers described how some young people do not identify with one main community background or another, and therefore do not meet the 'community background' recruitment criteria,

"*I think a lot of the issue is, not all young people would define that as one of their necessary issues, like you're talking economics, education, universal credit, you know, life barriers as opposed to them seeing community backgrounds as an issue. A lot of them don't identify, so therefore they don't meet our criteria, even though you may have somebody on your book you know is from a group, they just say no.*"

The demographics of the border region seemed to be a particular concern for staff working in projects in that geographical area, as evident from the survey results presented in previous chapters,

"*We cannot seem to be able to reach out to the Protestant community at all. We have tried and we have targeted specific schools and that, but our cohort is 100% Catholic.*"

Other staff noted that the particular target group of young people whom the projects aimed to recruit (i.e., those who are marginalised) made the very act of getting them through the door of their project a challenge,

"*We're trying to target obviously the vulnerable young people who may not be as visible on the street and trying to find out where they actually are hanging out and target them when they're out and about and it's just difficult.*"

The age restrictions were also a complicating factor for some projects – one staff member reported how recruitment in schools would be easier if the age range was lowered, as it was difficult to get 15- and 16-year-olds to commit to the project during busy examination periods. Another youth worker believed that the upper age limit should be extended too, as it was a *'missed opportunity'* for those with special needs.

Short Time Frame

The third sub-theme focused on difficulties with getting the project established in a relatively short time frame. This was particularly difficult for those partnerships that did not have previously established networks in each area. This was highlighted by a focus group participant who indicated,

"*So you were really starting at the ground again in getting to know people or who to contact for a start. And then, conscious of the fact that other programmes were being delivered in established organisations who already had all those contacts.*"

This had an implication on the level of trust between particular communities and the funded organisations, explained by one focus group participant,

> *"There's something to be said about the time that you have to spend building relationships with your community in order to be able to engage young people effectively, because what you're asking that community to do is to hand over the young people… a lot of our time and effort was about building relationships, not with young people, but with their networks."*

The relatively short time frame also was reported as a challenge in terms of preparation time particularly given late letters of offer, pulling resources together for qualifications, and paperwork requirements.

Theme 2: Challenges in Achieving Programme Outcomes

Factors which practitioners felt hindered their project's ability to achieve programme outcomes can be understood at three levels: macro, meso, and micro level.

Macro Level Issues

Macro level issues focused on the difficulties associated with external, structural factors that youth workers felt were beyond individual projects' control. Several of these issues were related to financial incentives (which was, as previously noted, brought up as a factor in recruitment). One of these was the fact that financial incentives could only be transferred into a participant's bank account. For young people coming from a care background or who had no fixed abode, opening a bank account was a process that took several weeks. The conditions of the incentive in terms of the hours attended per day were also deemed to be quite restrictive by some youth workers; for example, a young person might attend 5 hours on one day and 2 hours the next day, but half day attendances were not allowable. In addition, there was some confusion as to the circumstances under which the incentive can be offered, for example, if a young person is absent for a day due to health problems.

Bureaucracy and the level of paperwork needed for interactions with SEUPB and other government agencies was also mentioned as a barrier to achieving programme outcomes. Focus group participants mentioned delays with benefits statement forms and incentive payments being exchanged, which in turn sometimes delayed the engagement of young people. Staff from one project had to get a letter from the Department for Communities to confirm to Jobs & Benefits offices that participants' welfare payments were not to be affected because of the incentive they received from their PEACE4Youth project – some young people had encountered difficulties with this. Workers from several different projects raised the issue of cash flow as an area of concern –

organisations were sometimes overdrawn by large sums of money because financial resources were late in being transferred to projects. One youth worker also verbalised a fear of financial penalties if targets (in terms of numbers) weren't met, *"People feel petrified, but nobody wants to talk about it."*

Others brought up frustrations with registering participants for Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs), and the fact that claims forms were mainly in paper format and not online.

There were (not unanticipated) difficulties associated with operating a cross-border programme. For example, staff from projects that enrolled young people on particular visas could not bring them across the border due to visa restrictions. There were further issues with getting bills paid, delivering courses that might not be recognised in a different jurisdiction, and the differences in costs for services cross-border,

> *"I don't think the reality of the expected monies versus the resources that are in the area match up cos there should be more monies for certain areas that need travel, or there's no resources for food, there's no places for food"; "Being from the North [I] would have been aware of other organisations that would have come in and done other, like, first aid training and workshops, like, one-off things and that was part of their funded agreement and stuff … We just don't seem to be able to establish the same sort of links this side of the border… we can't find anybody that's going to do it within our budget".*

In general, the rurality of many projects was raised as something that led to higher costs, which cut into projects' abilities to provide resources,

> *"There's a lack of facilities as well…and then, if you want to go out, you want to bring the young people somewhere, you're going to have to put out the costs of the bus and the transport to get them out there."*

A further macro-level challenge discussed by the focus group participants was in relation to the overall programme design. For example, the project time frame and associated deadlines. Some youth workers struggled at the beginning of the Phase I cohorts to get things running as soon as they got letters of offer,

> *"Our experience that sometimes the cart was going before the horse and that was because of the ad hoc… everything was so, quite rushed"*

Other projects expressed confusion and reported hearsay about whether they could recruit during October, November and December of 2018 for Phase II while Phase I was being reviewed, *"The rumour was, at our regional meeting was, there was going to be maybe a slight extension to Phase I, but whether any of us has a job in Phase II…".* This was particularly a concern for those working in schools,

> *"We have to push back our schools [cohort], which means it's going to run from January to June next year."*

Aside from the time frame, another area of concern raised by youth workers from several different projects was the sustainability of the distance travelled in young people if they were not eligible to participate in a subsequent PEACE project; some also saw a 6-month project timeframe as too short for tackling the sorts of issues that young people in the programme were dealing with:

> *"They're going back into their communities I mean is there ever a risk that they will fall back into the old patterns?"*

Meso Level Issues

Meso level challenges to achieving programme outcomes were related to obstacles that staff faced in the daily running of their projects. A key issue highlighted by staff in all projects was the heavy workload and staff being thinly spread,

> *"If we're running four to five days of young people face time and then you have half a day to try and get everything else done as well as chasing up all the individual stuff"*

> *"If, God forbid, somebody was off on an extended period of sickness or whatever situation would arise, it leaves us very stranded."*

Workload difficulties also arose in relation to balancing the diverse needs of the cohort, because of the age range of those attending,

> *"The conversations that people would be having at 14 are very different from the conversations at 24 so, and there is a whole safeguarding issue around that. I'm very conscious of that you know, but in terms of the facilitation and teaching…it's just being very aware that there are younger members with older, you know."*

One youth worker felt that the structured, linear nature of their project didn't meet some young people's needs,

> *"I think part of the issue is, there's the set weeks. You do this recruitment, you do this and do this. But a young person's progression personally might be different, so they may need an outdoor pursuits organisation like [name of organisation] where they go for a couple of weeks, so they get used to people, then they need personal development specifically."*

Another challenge at the meso-level was the marrying-up of organisational and funder's strategic plans and the subsequent allocation of resources,

> *"It's the realities of an organisation only getting 40% additional funding based on the full staffing criteria. So there's all these rules and regulations and then there's strategic expectations of the organisation in which you function and then the strategic expectations of your funder which may not necessarily marry up especially when you don't have people in both."*

Lastly, the evaluation survey that programme staff were asked to administer to young people involved in the projects was also criticised for being too long, and unsuitable to the target group of young people taking part in the programme, with some youth workers reporting that young people required one-to-one help to complete it,

> *"I know some of our ones you see, they – they weren't genuinely reading the question, many struggled to understand."*

Micro Level Issues

At the micro level, practitioners stressed that the challenges with working with this unique target population were not fully considered when designing the Specific Objective. The high level of support that some young people required meant that engaging them was a challenge,

> *"Even getting them to get to that centre point is difficult. You can't, unless you want to haul them out of their beds, which I refuse to do, that defeats the point"*

Projects reported that they struggled to achieve the contact hours with young people and the 80% attendance rate, especially within school settings. For example, one youth worker stated,

> *"These young people were so hard to engage, they've never had an 80% attendance at school, and we're getting young people who haven't went to school all year, at 14%. And then I'm supposed to make them go from 14 to 80."*

Project staff across the board felt that the level of need of the young people participating in PEACE IV was higher that it had ever been before,

> *"Mental health, homelessness, addictions… you know, the drugs, like heroin, whatever, like it's… so the level of need's a lot higher"*

> *"[They have] really low self-esteem, and, I suppose for our project, that the, a lot of the initial few weeks, months, has been really focussed on that, sort of trying to build up a level of confidence and self-belief again."*

Several workers reported that they have had to work in smaller groups because of the complex needs of their cohorts. Youth workers from one project also reported having to work with young men around their normalisation of violence and unwillingness to admit to any issues to do with mental health.

There were different views concerning young people's reactions to doing good relations activities. While a few youth workers reported that some participants were very anxious about meeting members of other communities, others stated that,

> *"A lot of them don't have the Catholic and Protestant issues …they run about now in a mixed group…so I think, some of the content that's in it, about Catholic and Protestant isn't necessarily needed for the younger bracket."*

This led to some projects steering away from community relations between Catholic and Protestant communities to relationships with young people from minority ethnic communities.

> *"It's not being identified as a problem. So, I know the good relations workers are doing a lot on Muslims and stuff like that, you know that different type of good relations because, I think it's not really applicable sometimes."*

On the other hand, youth workers from several different projects reported surprise at the levels of racism they encountered during discussions with young people,

> *"We'd have found attitudes towards ethnic groups, refugees, we did a group work session last week and it was startling. The older ones…it was awful"*

Theme 3: Factors Contributing to Achieving Programme Outcomes

Practitioners highlighted several factors that supported programme implementation and the achievement of programme outcomes. The first focused on measures which facilitated recruitment of young people, including offering taster sessions and allocating resources to link with communities and organisations in the project areas before the start of the project as a means to build positive working relationships,

> *"You can't just come in and introduce this project; you have to find somebody who's going to sort of then, get to know them and then they'll mention to other people and it's sort of like a filter through process… it does take that bit of time to make any headway."*

A second key factor was the importance of commitment from the young people, which contributed to enhancing retention rates. Youth workers emphasised the positive influence of doing creative, fun, young people-led activities and excursions, giving them ownership of the project, and clear objective-setting, which meant that *"young people didn't feel like, I've been sent here, I need to be here, but, god you're staying in school an extra two hours to be with us and to participate."*

Offering training in skills that were highlighted by young people as important and providing logistical and structured help in getting to the group meetings were both mentioned as facilitating retention. Sources of support included, offering financial incentives (the £8 per day as well as childcare if needed), transport to the meetings, providing lunch, and offering flexible meeting times. Other youth workers mentioned regularly phoning participants to remind them of meetings and to encourage participation. This was linked to the clear levels of commitment of project staff to the young people,

> *"The support that's been put in by staff is above and beyond, way outside any hours of sixteen hours that goes, and for that particular type of young person it's not just the good relations element that's the important thing for them, it's all the extra support."*

Most importantly, the positive relationships built between project staff and participants, as well as the participants' parents or guardians, was argued to be a crucial factor in achieving programme success. As clearly stated by one youth worker,

"*What I think the real strength of this programme, is the relationships that those staff have with those young people and I would go as far as to say that those relationships are transformative, you know, like those young people are really changing as a result of relationships with the staff.*"

Youth workers talked about witnessing young people's confidence levels *'bloom'* as the projects progressed, particularly as a result of the *'constant', 'consistent'* and *'one-to-one'* support they were able to provide through the programme, and that young people felt they were in a *'safe space'* to address issues they had. One youth worker described their relationship as being built on *'mutual respect'* and *'equality'* and how this was different from other relationships they may have had with authority figures,

"*Their need is every bit as important as what we hope to achieve, you know, and it's how you speak to them, it's how you praise them – they don't really get that in school.*"

Several youth workers described how they spent time making sure there was buy-in from parents or guardians to continue this support for the projects and help increase the sustainability of the project outcomes,

"*You're not even building relationships with the young person, you're having to build it with the key people in their lives, so they understand if they don't hear from us, they can go round to the key people in their lives.*"

Through these relationships, youth workers were able to adapt to the needs of the young person and shape the programme content accordingly. Youth workers discussed using their baseline assessments to identify the needs of the young people in each cohort, and to see *"what they want to get out of the programme, whether they'll benefit from the programme and then we'll work with them towards their goals to guide them through."* Further, as a result of these close, 'safe-space' relationships, they were able to address and tackle community stereotypes and hostile intergroup relations, while supporting blossoming cross-community friendships,

"We're… facilitating those opportunities, aware of the group that's there and what's their knowledge base, so when somebody questions or challenges, they're a wee bit more open, you know, and discuss it that wee bit"

Lastly, the external support provided by SEUPB, the Quality and Impact Body (YouthPact – detailed in Chapter 7), and other external agencies was highlighted by project staff as a key factor in facilitating project outcomes. Staff appreciated that the programme was not prescriptive in terms of the daily structuring of activities and the theory of change employed by the projects, *"they say to you at the end of this process we want the young people to be or have or whatever but really how you get there is up to you."* Staff praised the flexibility and support of their SEUPB project officers and the advice and training given by YouthPact staff.

Theme 4: Building on the Programme for Phase II

Youth workers stressed the high level of need of the young people who were participating in the projects, and that many required one-to-one support and encouragement to attend the sessions and achieve their goals. It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that youth workers believed the Personal Development element of the programme was the most critical aspect,

"Those young people who have never had exposure to youth work programmes, those young people who have been ignored and haven't heard for a long, long time, a programme has come along, and the hook has been the personal and social development, because young people feel nurtured, they feel listened to, and they feel valued. The other stuff, is great, but I think the niche, or, for me anyway, the personal and social development stuff, and I think, while some staff really flourish in some of the other aspects of it, good relations and citizenship, it's all youth work at the end of the day."

There was recognition that the two other core areas also had to be explored, but that there were urgent mental health and personal issues that took precedence,

"We're dealing with young people with lots of issues that we're trying to iron out with them, you know, and, life-changing issues, and good relations maybe isn't always at the forefront for them, you know. So, it's just trying to balance that. Meet the targets of the programme, show distance travelled but, ultimately, deal with young people."

The specific topics under the Personal Development area that youth workers felt they spent most time addressing were mental health, low self-esteem, and leadership.

There was widespread agreement that the Good Relations element of the programme should not only focus on the conflict between the Protestant and Catholic communities, due to the increasing diversity of Northern Ireland and the increasing public awareness of inequalities faced by other groups, as well as the fact that, as previously highlighted, many participants did not perceive good relations between the Catholic / Nationalist and Protestant / Unionist communities as relevant to their lives,

> *"They've got like Syrian refugees on theirs and they're going, what do I think about Protestant or Catholic, what is a Protestant and Catholic, you know? So, I think they've maybe went a bit straight down the green and orange line thing and young people are kind of going, that's not really where I'm at right now."*

Nonetheless, many youth workers felt that 'understanding their own culture' was a very important part of the Good Relations aspect, because participants appeared to have very little knowledge,

> *"The majority of our young people are from a Protestant background and their knowledge of their own history is shocking… they're quite happy to go and build a bonfire on the eleventh and go and watch the bands, but they don't understand the, kind of, you know, the significance of it and stuff"*

Recommendations from youth workers going forward into Phase II therefore included putting more of a focus on relations with other groups including ethnic minorities, refugees and asylum seekers, Travellers, and the LGB&T community, as well as understanding their own identity. In addition, general conflict resolution skills were regarded as an important life skill for the young people to have, which also linked to the Personal Development core aspect of the programme.

Regarding the Citizenship element of the programme, most youth workers put an emphasis on volunteering and civic engagement, as this leant itself towards more creative and outdoor activities than other aspects of Citizenship. At the same time, it was sometimes deemed a difficult task to engage participants in volunteering,

> "*You ask young people what do you want to do to better your community, they say, look I don't even know how to better my life and you want me to better the community?*"

Nonetheless, youth workers were able to link volunteering to other programme outcomes, since volunteering gave young people a sense of pride and self-esteem, they could learn a new skill, and they had to learn to work positively with other people. As explained by one youth worker,

> *"When you see young people who are like I hate my community and nobody in my community likes me and they all judge me because I'm a hood and I'm this and then all of a sudden they start to take pride in themselves when I'm going out and I'm feeding the homeless and I'm getting involved and I'm more active and they're wanting to get a work placement in their community or their wanting to learn more about youth work or their wanting, you can actually see that sense of pride in them as well. This is a double benefit here."*

Summary

Focus group findings highlight a number of significant challenges that projects and youth workers faced in programme initiation and implementation. While some of these factors may represent teething issues for new collaborations and partnerships which may ease as the relationship develops, others will be faced by the projects moving into Phase II of the Programme. Recruiting young people and staff in the face of competition from other PEACE IV funded programmes, as well as from other governmental initiatives was particularly challenging. This was compounded by difficulties recruiting along the specified recruitment criteria. Youth workers were frustrated by tight deadlines, heavy workloads, and administrative difficulties. They were further challenged by the unique needs faced by the target group and their reluctance to engage with community relations work.

There were several factors, however, that served to facilitate positive outcomes for the projects during Phase I of the Programme. The projects used a number of innovative recruitment strategies that served to build rapport and encourage positive relationships between projects, within communities, and with young people. The establishment of positive relationships with young people was paramount during the initial recruitment phase and by continuing to develop trusting relationships with young people, as well as their families, served to encourage commitment and engagement with the project. Further, the use of flexible work practices in which the needs of the young people served to determine appropriate content was referenced as key. The hard work of the youth workers was bolstered by the level of support they received from the SEUPB project workers and the Quality and Impact Body which received high praise.

CHAPTER 10: Moving into Phase II: Focus Groups Findings

In this chapter, we present findings from a series of focus groups conducted with youth workers in 2019 and 2020 as part of the mid-term evaluation of Phase II. Four major themes were identified from the transcripts. Firstly, participants spoke of major changes that had been implemented from Phase I into Phase II of the programme due to reflection on their practice. Secondly, there were a series of challenges that appeared to have continued from Phase I, which could now be viewed as fundamental problems. Thirdly, participants spoke of the factors that were key to enhancing programme impact. Finally, there were comments on the overall design of the PEACE4Youth Programme, and recommendations for future peacebuilding work. Issues directly related to Covid-19 are discussed in subsequent chapters. Below we present the four major themes that developed with sub-themes and example quotes, in turn.

Theme 1: Evolution of Practice from Phase I into Phase II

Changes to the delivery of the PEACE4Youth Programme at a project level were discussed within focus groups as occurring in two ways: changes to how partnerships worked together, and intra-organisational changes.

Partnership Working

Staff reported that by the second year of the programme, there was a sense that projects had *'settled in'*, and many of the initial teething problems of forming new projects (sometimes with new partners) had been smoothed out. In terms of partnership work, some staff reported better communication channels between partners (*'now we're at a place where people are just lifting the phone to each other'*), with clearer roles having emerged:

> *"We're quite lucky in that we can have those open discussions, and this is very clearly what the programme's about and very clearly what it's not about. And sort of just trying to work more to complement each other."*

> *"[We] would have staff training and then they [partners] could come and join – we could come and join theirs, which is specifically work-oriented…But I think there's that many of us that everybody's been able to somehow fill in and fit in and spread the knowledge, so our partnership relations is probably pretty good."*

Staff were keen to stress the positive impact of the strengthened relationships between partners. There was a benefit in terms of the wider use of partners' networks and resources, which improved the experience of young people on the programme:

> *"I feel like we've got better at that and kind of utilising those opportunities. And then, I feel like, the connections we've had with community organisations has just developed naturally, so…the citizenship stuff and good relations stuff has come to another level, this year – just with the partnership I suppose."*

> *"They and their training is brilliant. Being partners with them meant that we can share training resources."*

Having undergone experience of the project, some staff reported working together with partners to make adaptations to the project design:

> *"I think it's just one of those things, that y'know, where you can know your partners on paper, the entire thing is theoretical, but until you practically get into the day to day grind of what you're doing, those things can change, so we have had some adaptions in terms of agreement with partners, but that's just finding like what works best for both of us as we're moving forward."*

The following staff member reported how, upon reflection with partners, they had changed the design of their project so that one-to-one work between a young person and youth worker occurred in the first weeks of the project before group work, to build a relationship of trust:

> *"The set-up of the project's changed slightly… instead of us starting then the first week, straight in with teamwork and stuff like that, our first two weeks is actually one-to-ones…because there's been so many needs coming through. We've actually had to sit with them and do intensive needs assessments and getting to know them and build a wee bit of relationship to get them in. Whenever we were sort of recruiting and then starting the first day, a lot of the ones maybe were sitting going, 'Oh I'm not ready, I'm not ready.'"*

Staff also described how project partners were using each other's networks to not only recruit a greater diversity of young people within cohorts, but to open up further opportunities for young people by exposing them to a wider range of services:

"I would see a big impact on the young people, I'm working with two groups both in Belfast, and I think they get more, they would get more out of meeting groups from other parts of the country…learning about their perceptions of what the community relations and stuff like that is, where it can be very sort of black and white in Belfast."

"Embedded into our programme is [our] partner's community partners …to give young people a wider scope of the differences that are out there in the communities I suppose…so that would certainly be more better than working [with same-umbrella organisation] partners, if that makes sense."

"I suppose with ourselves one of the big themes is about reconnecting young people with their communities. Young people maybe disengaged from services [and] facilities, so you know, we've had a lot of young people who their progression has actually been into volunteering opportunities with community providers within the area. So I suppose that's been the benefit of having those partners on board and having the buy-in."

Indeed, one staff member explained how working in a partnership and coming together as a partnership for events gave young people a sense of being connected to a larger community, which complemented the Citizenship element of the programme:

"I feel like it's right where we've got better at working, as a whole team – so we do a lot more… social events, or collective social actions, together as a whole, and it's giving young people a sense of – they're part of something bigger, not just their own group that they come to every day."

Staff from one project explained, however, that while they had not had daily contact with their project partners, they had invested more in local networks as they moved into their Phase II work:

"I suppose whenever you're thinking about partner organisations….our partner organisations are like [in counties far apart from each other], so we don't really have that much contact with them in our day-to-day stuff, but, in terms of building partnerships with community organisations and just creating that wider support for young people so that they know supports that are in place after our programme finishes or that they know supports that are there in addition to our programmes for the more kinda complex needs that we're not specialised for, has really been a benefit this time around."

As well, projects that involved school-based cohorts described the positive impact of having closer relationships with schools. One staff member, whose project began to recruit more school-based cohorts than community-based cohorts in Phase II, reported how this change in design and close relationship with school partners had led to them evolving and developing their youth work practice, especially in terms of how to make good relations work relevant to a wider range of young people:

> *"It's changed for us in terms of, because of the numbers that we, our target is, we'd had to change. So our community-based programme has kinda had to take a backseat, it's all schools-based now for us…it's meant then that we have the opportunity to work within different schools, and we've developed really strong partnerships with those schools and had really, thankfully, great experiences working with the schools, for the most part. We have been working now with more like special needs young people and additional needs and really branched that out and really started to sort of develop our learning around that too and help us learn different things about different young people and their different additional needs as well as physical and the learning difficulties that come along with that, and adapting the programme to suit them. Y'know so if I were talking with them about good relations and about the language that we're using, they can understand it, relate to it."*

Intra-Organisational Change

Several staff reported that some of the key (positive) changes that had occurred since the beginning of Phase II were related to their own organisations and how they had handled the demands of the programme. This included being more at ease with the paperwork, which led to more contact time with young people and a more streamlined process overall:

> *"We've just been able to, a wee bit, manage more with the paperwork, cause the first time round it was, all heavy paperwork, with the surveys too, but now cause we sort of, went through the first phase of it, we're sort of able to - have it set out and we know where to go and it makes it a wee bit easier for us to, sort of focus on more direct contact time with the young people and, not taking away from that to try and get surveys done and this that and the other. But, I think the paperwork has definitely been something different for us this time around."*

Recruiting staff was an issue raised by several projects during Phase I. As projects moved into Phase II, data from the focus groups revealed that this was less of a core challenge. One coordinator described how their project had worked with SEUPB project officers to weave flexibility into the project design, which allowed them 'to adapt it so that it was able to be delivered by a part-time

worker rather than a full-time worker.' Furthermore, being able to recruit a coordinator to post brought more stability to the project:

> *"I'm overseeing things, do y'know what I mean, rather than a couple of different people picking up different pieces and that it's sort of on me and I can run with it and I sort of have the broad picture."*

There were some changes noted in terms of how the recruitment of young people occurred. One staff member reported that their project had experienced referrals coming in from young people who were past participants for their friends, which was taken as a positive recommendation – *"it's great when that sort of comes through because it means you're doing something right."* Others reported a wider range of referral sources than they had in Phase I. This was partly due to continuing challenges they experienced with recruitment, which will explored further in Theme 2.

Other staff reported that there wasn't as much need to 'market' the programme as compared to Phase I, as young people who are approached as potential participants are already aware of the programme and what it is trying to achieve:

> *"Definitely, I think last year was a lot of us explaining, the whole concept of PEACE and [the project] and what it's all about, whereas, people already know now, so you're able to hit the ground running a bit more."*

In relation to within-cohort project delivery, staff from several projects reported that they had developed in-house banks of activities or a 'facilitator's toolkit', having reflected on the needs of the young people they recruited and what had worked best for them in Phase I. Staff stated that this had streamlined their planning process and saved staff time, while being responsive to the differing needs of young people:

> *"The biggest thing we probably did was we developed what we call a facilitator's toolkit, and it's basically like all the best bits looking in the sessions that went the best during Phase One…we kinda put it all together in a like a resource file and the materials and all for them as well and so we use that as a bit of a kind of a back-up for our planning, y'know —this session worked really well for this topic so sort of we've LGBT sessions in there, we've got mental health awareness skills, and so it's just that if there's stuff that a facilitator won't be familiar with, there's information for contacting an external speaker or information that they can go on… if they don't have time, if they're facilitating two groups and there's very limited*

time for planning. And that's there ready to go, and obviously you can adapt to your group's needs as well."

In a similar vein, several staff reported that their activity was more youth-led than in Phase I because they had given feedback to programme staff about what they liked or didn't like about certain activities. One person described other ways in which the activity now followed a more co-production model, rather than a top-down approach:

"Mine has kinda changed in a sense if you know what I mean – last time in Phase I, the day we came in we planned the whole six months. [In Phase II we planned] wee stages with these ones instead and it was actually them who planned their whole project themselves, so they organised a trip to the peace walls in Belfast…they did a couple of wee things…but the young people has got to choose where they've wanted to go, or they - like they researched the whole residential themselves now – last group didn't do that."

Indeed, staff reported that in general, there was a better understanding of the needs presented by young people who were recruited for PEACE4Youth:

"Definitely, I think Phase One really opened our eyes a lot to what some of the needs are currently for young people…if you've worked on certain peace projects before you'll see that the needs now are very different from what the needs were then."

A greater understanding of the needs of the target group of young people also resulted in youth workers having more confidence in terms of how to reach those young people:

"So Phase One was us sort of starting to see those issues [young people's anxiety], and then Phase Two is like, ok how did we address them then and how can we address them now, what's a better way of reaching out to young people?"

A different project had reflected on the needs of the target young people and had altered their lead-in strategy before officially recruiting the young person, so that the young person could feel more at ease and be more likely to commit to the project if they signed up:

"I had young people that were sitting from March and they were waiting for ages if y'know what I mean, you were not really getting to see them but we were lucky enough I didn't lose them like. You were still getting in touch, texting them, whatever, but they were saying now

about expanding the needs assessment out a wee bit, so making it—linking in with them if you can. Like obviously you need to be realistic and stuff, but linking in with them a wee bit more so actually going out to see them and that can reduce anxiety and stuff like that [Multiple: yeah] and then you can really see who is gonna like start the programme and who's not…if they're willing to meet up with you, say fortnightly or whatever, you have to keep in touch and stuff and I think it will work."

Summary

This theme has outlined the constructive changes that have been undertaken by the staff and community workers within the PEACE4Youth funded projects in the first half of Phase II of the programme. These changes are on a reflection of what worked well in Phase I, as well as the challenges in the first year of the programme. At the partnership level, there was evidence of strengthened relationships, which resulted in benefits to the young people involved in the programme, due to the shared use of networks and connections to a diverse of people within communities and a sense of being part of a larger community of the PEACE4Youth Programme. At the intra-organisation level, there was a sense that the projects had become embedded into the organisational structures. Administrative tasks and logistics were streamlined, and adaptations had been made in terms of how young people were recruited. There was a deep understanding of the needs of the young people targeted by the PEACE4Youth Programme, and with project activities now tried and tested, there was confidence in the effectiveness of the interventions to improve young peoples' lives.

Theme 2: Fundamental Challenges

A second theme to emerge from the analysis of the focus groups were a series of fundamental challenges that included a range of issues that have continued from Phase I of the programme. Due to the variety of issues discussed, the theme will be presented in several thematic sub-themes.

Recruitment, Retention, and Engagement

Despite a range of efforts to widen the 'pool' of young people recruited to PEACE4Youth funded projects, representatives of several projects stated that enrolling eligible young people was a continuing difficulty. There were two main reasons given to explain this – the perceived concentration of the PEACE IV projects in particular geographical areas, and the fact that young people who had previously completed a PEACE IV project were ineligible to enrol in subsequent PEACE IV projects. Staff felt that they were *"running out of young people"* in some areas, and that it was sometimes difficult to book community spaces for their activities, given the number of local projects. As

mentioned in the previous section about changes made moving into Phase II, some projects were recruiting more school-based than community-based cohorts to address this (*"especially in the South it's transition years…they've a lot more free time, but schools also do want them engaged"),* but there was a sense that it remained a challenge:

> *"We've thirteen PEACE programmes in West Belfast and you're all looking for the same age range, offering the same sort of blueprint – obviously other programmes are individual but, they're you're going round on peoples' doors and going, 'Were you not here last week?'"*

> *"We're finding that at the moment it's almost like there's too much PEACE IV work going on. We're coming across some young people that have already been through the process and they can't go through it again with another another organisation."*

Staff from one project reported that their recruitment was made easier because of the marketing capabilities of their large lead partner organisation, but noted that young people living in more rural locations still had to travel long distances to engage – the staff believed that having more satellite locations would work. Staff from both rural and urban projects noted that location was a key consideration – if project activities were not within walking distance or on a bus route, it was very difficult to engage young people. For example, gaps in public transport provision negatively impacted recruitment to rural projects more than urban projects:

> *"Part of the issue [with recruitment] is transport – the rural locations, fine if they're in Sligo town or going to school in Sligo town or around Sligo – but if they're out in Tubbercurry, or Ballymote, how do they get in?"*

Rural projects were often reliant on parents driving young people to meetings, but there was recognition that parents may have a lot to deal with themselves and may not be able to do this regularly. Staff from one project detailed the number of hours they spent in minibuses collecting young people in rural areas and leaving them home again, which was *"resource intensive"* (although one project worker used the opportunity to do one-to-one mentoring on buses). Transport costs and logistics also negatively impacted the extent of cross-community work that could be carried out in cohorts that had rural-urban links. Staff from several projects independently raised the issue of some young people's lack of confidence and anxiety about using public transport (even if services are available), which negatively affects their participation.

Whilst some projects reported that they had experienced more success in recruiting young people from a Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist (PUL) background to their groups in than they had in Phase I, others were still struggling. These staff reported that they had approached youth clubs in predominantly Protestant areas to help with recruitment, to find that they were already partnered with other organisations. As a result, they had recruited PUL young people from the streets who were not engaged in youth clubs. One youth worker felt that part of the problem was a lack of faith that the project would lead to long-term change or support, perhaps due to past negative experiences:

> *"We're also finding that, like for us we have to have the 40/40/20 mix – we're not really getting that. There is a, there's a [PUL- background] group that just don't really want to engage that much, and going from talking with the teams up in [area] it's like 'you just want us to fill, fill seats at the moment, and then once this is finished you'll turn your backs on us again'. Y'know so that's, that's the sad thing."*

Groups that could not recruit the 40/40/20 mix of young people were reliant on meeting with other groups to do cross community hours, but some staff reported that these groups didn't have the same depth of discussion about good relations issues. The following staff member reported that more communication with project partners could help resolve this issue:

> *"I feel we need to use our connections maybe, because we're having problems recruiting, from Protestant families on the Northern side of the border. And we have connections here with our own churches y'know with our Protestant churches…that we could make the connections for them. We need to be talking among ourselves on the project boards and, and getting to know the people that actually can influence. Because that might be all it takes is a Protestant minister on this side of the [border], to be able to say to his partner or whatever up in [names of counties]."*

As in Phase I, project staff stressed that there was a challenge presented by the long-term, high contact nature of the programme, given the commitment it requires from young people. For some young people, the time investment may not be fully apparent until they are actually in the programme. Others will have personal circumstances or particularly complex needs that make a long-term commitment difficult:

> *"Some of the guys come into the programmes and they're totally up for it, and then they realise they're actually not ready for it and they're sitting going, 'I've bit off more than I can chew here and I'm not ready for six months,' or, 'Y'know I thought I was ready for it but I*

actually need to step out of it for now,' and then they'll maybe go into another programme later on down the line— to that end, it may seem like they're not achieving…"

"We have some that don't have the ability to have a proper hygiene routine; that are sofa-surfing; that are—so it's, these are the issues you're trying to break down before you can even start actually working as a group…it probably does speak for the dropout as well."

Other challenges associated with retention and engagement included engaging young people during the summer months, particularly young people in school-based cohorts (*"the [group] that starts in the summer is the hardest one to recruit because the school's aren't there, or there's other summer programmes happening"; "they've kind of equated us with school… they've kind of stopped coming and it's been really hard to keep them going"*) and engaging young people in group activities who have little or no English (*"it's a challenge now trying to make sure everybody gets the same level of service"*).

Several staff mentioned that the recruitment of young people from certain areas needed approval by *"local gatekeepers".* One project worker described how, at times, they had to ask *"to have a centre in certain areas, or is it ok if I take these young people from this estate."* One project worker noted how tensions in communities outside of the project, such as the tragic killing of Lyra McKee, local election campaigns, and the uneasy political context given the suspension of the NI assembly had led to the breakdown of engagement within one group:

"I had a group and they were obviously from different backgrounds and stuff, everything was going really, really well, and do you remember the girl who was killed in Creggan, Lyra McKee? That had a really big impact on my group, my group has went completely off-scale. Then one of them was commenting that it wasn't our side that killed her, it was your own side, d'you know that I mean? So that kinda threw everything in the air and we had to kinda take a break for a week….it's like that you would think a peace programme would bring them together, but I think just what happened in the city the last couple of months has had a big, huge impact on this group, and like I can't – like I couldn't – not to say like I'm waving my magic wand and make them all come back again but like anytime I plan groups together then they don't – they don't show, d'you know?"

"That [election] completely divided them again… from then on, one side wasn't meeting the other side and then the days that I planned to bring them together, nobody showed."

Meso-Level Challenges

Meso-level fundamental challenges were related to issues that continued to arise in the daily running of projects. While there was a firm sense that partnerships had smoothed out many issues of project delivery from Phase I, several project staff noted that some difficulties had arisen due to differences in how things were communicated to young people, and differences in their approaches to the work being undertaken:

> *"There kinda can be a bit of tensions going – in terms of like where people are coming from, y'know, in terms of value bases."*

> *"There's been issues with communication I suppose, trying to clarify for the young people, and that can create a little bit of tension between project staff and…that's annoying, it's annoying."*

At times there were different expectations in relation to how flexible or available youth workers could or should be for young people; a concern that was reiterated by staff during the Covid-19 lockdown period in relation to how available they should make themselves online (see Section 7.6.2):

> *"I think we're just, we're used to being flexible y'know… we suit the, the service users, like y'know, we'll work around them, and our timetable we'll go off, off of when they can meet us. But for [partner], that was almost like a new concept for them. They couldn't, and a lot of them are part-time staff, they have other jobs as well so y'know they couldn't get time off and stuff."*

Recruitment of staff did not present the same level of challenges as it had been in Phase I, but staff from three projects mentioned having to adapt their activities to fit with part-time hours or that they had issues with staff turnover, which in turn had impacted on the activities they could do and the consistency within a project (*"They haven't got the one-to-one 'cause we haven't got the staff at the moment to do the one-to-one, there's been issues regarding clearance and staff leaving the project, so there's only one staff there"). Staff from another project said they had agreed with the larger organisation in their partnership for a member of their staff to be seconded into the smaller organisation on a part-time basis, which filled a gap in the workload but *"it's not nearly enough – there needs to be four or five [extra staff]."* The staff member described how this had made logistics more difficult for booking and conducting activities. Another project worker stated that *"there's no commitment, the staff kept changing, they kept moving. We have them for six months, they'll be gone."*

Regarding paperwork, some project staff reported delays in administrative systems flagging up when a young person had previously completed a PEACE-funded project; sometimes young people were months into the group. This had an adverse financial impact on organisations, and some staff requested clarity about how to find out whether a young person is currently or has been previously in another project. Issues with the evaluation survey were also raised. Staff reported that the core version of the survey was onerous, particularly for young people who have English as an additional language:

> *"They've only been here for four months y'know it's just not applicable at all and we're trying to obviously break down those barriers of integration and…participate in the group, but to be honest it just feels like we're just doing the surveys for the sake of it, with these particular young people."*

The shorter, illustrated version of the evaluation survey which was developed for young people who have learning difficulties or issues with literacy was more welcomed:

> *"The adapted one's great like, we almost would love it for the groups that we're currently working with."*

Cross-border working continued to present challenges for some groups. One major barrier was the restriction on young people who are refugees crossing the border. Another issue mentioned was the invalidation of insurance policies for certain activities when they were carried out on the other side of the border, such as water sports or horse riding.

Summary

Despite innovations and adaptations on the part of projects, the recruitment and retention of young people into projects continues to pose some challenges. This is due to several factors: issues with service provision; the high level of needs among the target group of young people and the intense commitment required of them to participate in the programme; and ongoing community divisions. Other challenges that continue for some projects into the first half of Phase II include: differing partner expectations; recruitment of staff; delays in knowing whether a young person was eligible to complete the project; and the burdensome nature of the core version of the evaluation survey.

Theme 3: Factors Promoting Programme Impact

This theme explores the multiple factors highlighted by project staff that were viewed as crucial to the achievement of the PEACE4Youth Programme outcomes. Each factor is presented below as its own sub-theme.

Positive Relationships and Mentoring

The person-centred, positive relationships built between project staff and young people were seen as crucial for achieving programme success. Establishing that relationship from the outset was *"critical…or it's not going to work at all."* As one youth worker explained:

> *"[My role is to be] that critical frame, that lamplighter to try and sort of develop critical thinking, help them, challenge them, their values…you're not fighting with them, it's like it's all about exploring and trying to help them to explore their values and we're not putting our things on to them but it's about them."*

The first few months of the project were viewed as *"key"*, with young people getting to know the staff and building up to having more difficult conversations. Representatives from most projects claimed that during this time they met with young people mostly on a one-to-one basis to work on personal barriers and build trust:

> *"Some young people don't have a place to live, don't have any money, need a hand getting foodbank vouchers, and like all those initial steps to overcome the realistic barriers that they have in their lives is really crucial I'm finding to building relationships, to saying you're not, I don't just have to come in here to sit in a group you're actually here to work with me where I'm at, and that person-centred approach is so vital for then building that trust, and then working up to having those conversations."*

Youth workers were keen to state that progress in the Personal Development range of outcomes (particularly confidence and self-esteem) were the cornerstone of progress in the other key outcome areas of Good Relations and Citizenship, and they worked hard on this at the beginning of their time with each young person. Personal Development is *"massive, even for a child that comes from a very stable consistent structured home"*: Youth workers reported making it clear to young people what their expectations were, and what young people could expect of them. They challenged young people to build their self-reliance, resilience, and critical thinking skills; some had major issues with anxiety:

> *"There's an awful lot of groundwork and confidence-building that has to be done first before you can even start about going across the border and meeting up, with a group that's over in [town]."*

Youth workers went into great depth to explain why one-to-one mentoring has such a positive impact on young people. Young people are having the chance to *"talk about issues that wouldn't normally be talked about,"* even for those young people who are reticent to share their experiences and opinions in a group:

> *"You get loads of big personalities in a group, but having those wee one-to-one chats and conversations to see where they're at brings it back to them if you know what I mean, gives them the opportunity to go, 'Well actually I am struggling with this,' or, 'I, I am doing ok."*

Mentoring helped young people to talk through family and transgenerational issues they encountered, such as *"separation, alcohol abuse…and massive social issues….several partners maybe in a home… it's definitely where you learn more about them, is the one-to-one. And you do get to know what's the situation at home."*

Regarding Good Relations outcomes, mentoring by a role model who is perhaps from a different community background had an additional positive impact. Young people formed attachments to their youth workers (*"the lads really grew to me")* and seeing their mentor engage with other young people from different backgrounds increased their own confidence to engage *("I didn't think some of them would have grew to me because they were that radicalised in their opinions…but they did").* One youth worker stated that young people's *"defences might be up"* about their intergroup attitudes even in a one-to-one situation, but *"when there is a bit trust…mostly they would bring it up themselves and you'd sorta just guide them, or steer them."*

Relationship-building with parents and guardians was also viewed as important to both the engagement of young people and the impact that the programme would have on young people. Youth workers described *"texting going on all the time, with change of venues maybe, bringing in whatever clothes or money or lunches…you're dropping them back again and you have a quick chat."* For more vulnerable young people, youth workers reported having meetings with parents to help resolve issues if the young people were struggling. One youth worker however said that some parents have a lot of *"fear…it's how they're raised, it is that sort of fear of putting your child at risk"* which can impact how willing they are to let young people partake in certain activities or go to certain

places, while other parents or guardians "*force [young people] out of the house*" if they are reluctant to engage.

Structured Days

For some young people, having a routine in place and maintaining a structure to their day was viewed by youth workers as highly important to their success. Project activities were characterised by sitting down together, eating meals and talking together (*"it sort of replicates like a family situation…most of them never did that."*) One youth worker explained that for some young people who came from the fostering system or had been in care *"a lot of things are done for them, then they reach an age and are 'let go'….they've no concept of how to budget their money, how to live in the home by themselves, how to cook and stuff."* Having the structure in place for a sustained period of time and keep to a schedule *"gives them a wee bit of footing to actually get a bit of order into their life and then that can build them up for tying that on into five days a week for a College course then."* Indeed, for those projects connected to colleges of further and higher education, youth workers reported having to use the space carefully – they didn't want to 'split them off' and feel alienated from other students, but at the same time they wanted the experience of the project to feel like alternative education.

Group Work and Diversity

Group work was a key element of achieving project impact. Sharing the experience of the project with other group members and progressing together *"has the potential to create a real bond between them."* Long term contact in the group gave young people an excellent chance of forming friendships, even if the sustainability of the friendships is more uncertain:

> *"Just the process, and giving them the opportunity to be friends, and now they're like that [crosses fingers] and you can't separate them, so—that's not to say some people might be a wee bit standoff-ish about making friends and stuff because they have their own issues and they might be a wee bit self-conscious, and just a wee bit nervous and stuff in general, but generally they do make friends—whether they last or not, it's just up to the people…cause a friendship is a lot of effort, y'know and it just depends whether or not they're ready for it because obviously as well if they are coming from a background where y'know they are struggling or they don't have a house or things like that there, then they may shy away a wee bit more."*

Some youth workers gave examples of deep friendships forming (and at times, romantic relationships) between young people *"that would never have formed even though they lived in like*

close proximity," with some relationships having continued since Phase I of the programme. Social media was viewed as particularly useful for helping to connect people at the end of projects, and to also ensure that young people remained exposed to a wider range of viewpoints and ideologies.

In the same vein, helping peers with their own journeys promoted young people's personal development *"even if they don't open up…even if they're just participating on a particular topic, like say mental health issues, and they're comforting somebody or they're just, they're supporting somebody through it."* Group work with a diverse range of young people was considered especially effective, as it further developed young people's self-awareness and understanding of their own identity and respect for other cultures:

> *"We've been really lucky to have four asylum seekers in our group, which has brought that level of diversity to a whole new level, which has been brilliant and the kind of green and orange conversation has just opened up so so much."*

> *"The diversity that we've had this time round in the group has really [given] us an opportunity to bring that all into the room because having the, having two girls from Somalia sitting saying to the group, 'But Catholics and Protestants are both Christians, so what is the difference?'"*
> *"A lot of the Good Relations learning is actually very natural, because they've been in a group with people from different backgrounds, diversities like, for example a group that's seeing refugees, LGBT, Catholic, Protestant, ones that come from different ways that others would never associate themselves with…they'd never seen, never seen a Muslim before."*

The Good Relations and Citizenship elements of the programme were found to complement each other particularly well when young people from multiple cultures were together in the room, and the consideration of the circumstances of young refugees and asylum seekers in groups helped give other young people a better understanding of power structures in society and human rights:

> *"We're doing a lot of work around identity too, like what makes you 'you' and starting that from the basics of what you're presenting to us in the room right back to your core and what are your values and what is your identity…I think it's important not to understand just your own identity, but trying to figure out like the wider society as well, understanding like power structures and who pulls the string and how the media can influence us in terms of the decisions that we make, 'cause even, how often do you look at something on Facebook and think about ten minutes later, 'oh it wasn't true.'"*

Diversity could come in many forms, and youth workers were keen to show young people that their community was *"not as black and white as y'know, born and raised in [area] and that's who I am, there's a lot a lot of kind of grey areas within that as well…your community is the care system or is the hostels or is the homeless community, or is the drug-takers or is the rough sleepers."* There was a view among youth workers that young people's past intergroup contact and perception of diversity within their community had an impact on their starting point on the Good Relations indicators: *"the young people that have the really kind of entrenched views of Catholic, Protestant, whatever else…are the young people that haven't really associated with anybody outside of their street."* Indeed, one youth worker described the positive impact of deliberately running group work sessions in community centres that were viewed as 'belonging' to one community or the other, believing that it was important to open up those spaces to young people who had never been in those areas before.

Connecting Good Relations Work to Real Life

As found during Phase I of the programme, youth workers reported having a challenge making the Good Relations element of the programme seem relevant and engaging to young people. At times, sectarian attitudes and behaviours were uncovered after some discussion: *"quite often their initial reaction is, it's not my fight, dy'know, that was another generation and stuff…then once you start scratching beneath the surface [they] start to go well dy'know if they burn our flag we should burn their flag, sort of thing."*

For others, youth workers connected Good Relations work to everyday experiences, macro-aggressions and other behavioural consequences of sectarianism: *"some young people would say something like, 'it's not to do with me I don't identify as Catholic or Protestant,' or whatever and maybe they have…mixed families…but then sometimes they're going, 'Well depending on where I am I'll use my other, the other surname'."* This strategy of starting with the *"small, everyday things that happen to them"* was seen as successful because these experiences could be connected back to attitudes and values, but *"if you start at the attitudes and values I find it can be difficult to get the buy-in."*

Current affairs and politics were also a starting point for conversations about good relations:

> *"They say 'it doesn't impact me' or 'that was in the past' y'know but then sort of when they start talking about identity and, like current affairs and stuff that… 'cause whenever something happens, that's whenever they do….it would make them look at themselves a bit."*

One youth worker described starting with history and culture, *"educating them on their own culture…then the guys raise the questions and they take the lead on it and you go with that and see what actually comes up."*

The good relations impact had in some cases spread wider than the young people in the programme, to their families too:

> *"I've plenty of young people who are going back and now have the confidence to challenge their parents and say, do you know what…maybe you shouldn't really be saying that about this type of group."*

One youth worker gave the example of a young person from a republican area who went to watch a Twelfth of July march, and as such, had challenged her family's cultural norms: *"her mummy went and stopped me one day and I was like 'she wanted to do it'; she was all 'you're going against us', and in all honesty - I was all 'that's the whole point of the programme, y'know you're supposed to challenge each other.'"* Another youth worker said that several parents had later contacted them about the Good Relations work to tell them about the positive change they had witnessed.

These attitudes were sometimes linked to concerns about young people's sense of personal safety *("you see a lot of parents not wanting to let their kids go, 'I don't want so and so in that area")* and where they can go in the city; these are often transgenerational norms that need to be addressed by youth workers too, to achieve progress on Good Relations:

> *"For them, a lot of it is transgenerational, in terms of the Catholic-Protestant thing, and it's more of a—it's more either what their parents or their grandparents has told them about Catholics or Protestants, or it's more just a—a safety thing, 'cause there's this label of a particular area, and if I'm in that area I'm going to get hurt or something's going to happen to me. So it's more about addressing those sorts of issues."*

Related to the previously mentioned issue of gaining access to communities through gatekeepers for recruitment, challenging community-level norms was seen as a barrier to the long-term sustainability of positive changes in Good Relations areas:

> *"When you're running within a certain community, then the young people will know exactly who pulls what strings in that community, and they won't want to be seen to be expressing*

any opinion or view that goes against that, because word travels fast. And that's even from the recruitment point of view as well."

Indeed, one youth worker relayed the story of a participant who had made many friendships within the group, but pressure from his own life outside of the group resulted in the friendships fading away: *"Everyone loved him, everyone got on very strong, but he was too ashamed to bring that outside of the group. And that's something we have no control over we can only do what we do within the group."*

The "Magic" of Residentials

Residentials were viewed as the *"cement"* that gave time and space to link a lot of the PEACE4Youth work together, thereby promoting success in all three outcome areas of the programme.

Youth workers claimed that for some young people, the *"magic"* of residentials stemmed from *"taking them away from their usual environment…in the past they may have always been told, no this is where you're from, this is how you have to behave, this is what you must do, this is what you must wear, this is – we're taking that and going, 'run free!'"* For an extended period of time, young people *"can forget about everything they're used to…they would sort of near enough be themselves."* For those most in need, a residential can also offer stability and calm for a number of days (though it was reported as sometimes being a triggering environment for those who had been in custody or in care), and it offered respite for young people who are carers or are worrying about making ends meet – *"they get to be kids."*

Residentials were said to *"break down those barriers"* in conversation due to the *"safe space"* it provides and the *"bubble"* that is created. One youth worker described how a residential had given her group space to reconsider an earlier argument and division in the group (*"they were having these wee conversations and then I said 'right would you look at it this way now?'"*) helping them to become a cohesive group again.

The mixture of structured and unstructured activities in the residential gave young people *"the space, I suppose, to explore both new friendships and what's important to them, their values."* Young people engaged in *"deep sharing"* and respect for each other and their past experiences emerged from this. The new environment of a residential often included a diverse range of young people from the wider project, giving them an opportunity to learn more about each other's cultural backgrounds.

Residentials also gave young people an opportunity to help and encourage others: *"what we find is a lot of young people step up to support other young people in that situation…they're like, 'Come on, you can do it.'"* The environment was also conducive to deepening young person-youth worker relationships by giving them an opportunity to talk about things in depth:

> *"if there is anything that comes up, any issues, and you wanted to address it with the young person, [you can do that]…[maybe] you haven't had time in the group to do it, and you wanted to sort of keep an eye on them over a period of time."*

Young people also get to see that the youth workers *"are human, we have fears too…the young people are cheering us on [the high ropes]…we're in the same situation as them as well, it's good for them to realise."* They role modelled the behaviours they wanted young people to emulate, *"I think it's the letting those moments happen as well, being prepared to do things that you want young people to do, and having that as a role model."*

Many project workers mentioned the importance of holding two residentials in the journey of a group. Some felt it was best to have a first residential near the beginning of the project to *"get to know each other, crack this open."* Holding a residential at the mid-point of their involvement improved relationships *"tenfold"* – youth workers got to understand the young people better, the young people got to know staff and each other better too. As one youth worker stated, after the mid-point residential, *"you're always going back to those memories— 'Ah do you remember [event] on the residential!'."* A second residential at the end of the process helped to give "closure" and gave a chance for young people to *"reflect"* on the progress they had made, as some young people found it hard to leave after six months together – *"it's a big thing".* Youth workers reported spending time at the final residential preparing young people for their next steps, so that they did not fall backwards in their progress:

> *"The residential at the end probably would be something that would cement it and go, 'Right well this journey's over now, what's coming next? And who am I because of that?'"*

Outdoor Work

Outdoor work often took place within the context of residentials or day trips, and project staff from across the programme stressed the importance of this to help achieve programme outcomes.

Outdoor work included cooperative, goal-based group tasks that were particularly effective in helping to break down intergroup barriers between young people (*"that's what we've found…our best tool is*

the outdoor environment, 'cause it breaks down all barriers….they're talking to each other a lot more.") One youth worked described an interaction between two young men from different community backgrounds during an outdoor activity; one was helping the other to climb a rock face, and said *"Y'know you really helped me out there, it's not always me helping you out,' and then he's like ah, y'know, this is what the whole programme's been about! Unreal!"* Such experiential learning was viewed as more effective than what could be learned in a classroom: *"they're always in a classroom…sometimes their defences might be up."*

For young people who had mental health or addiction issues, outdoor experiences were associated with positive learning moments:

> *"It's invaluable to our groups. We're talking about working with young people who have drug issues and stuff and we're teaching them that you can get the exact same high from climbing up a mountain or, you know it's that seeking natural highs, it's unbelievable, it's really, really affirming for them and life-changing."*

> *""There's young people [who] have huge issues with OCD and being dirty and can't even be in that outside environment at all – some people have never left Belfast…we're giving them the opportunity to climb somewhere up the Mournes…you get them to look at the fear that they went through to complete that and how they feel about completing that task, and then ask them the next time they feel that fear in a classroom setting or in the community, how they can like get back to feeling that how they can face the fear and get back to that feeling good thing in that natural [environment]."*

The (mainly Personal Development and Good Relations) impact of such activities was embedded by the skill of staff in their reflection of what had happened during activities, picking up on cues, and without fear, unpacking the work properly:

> *"If they happen to be doing abseiling, it's all related back into challenging your views by going into fears with resilience, so it's always that outdoor stuff is thematically linked in with the programme, very sort of intense work that can be done with that thing if it's reflected on properly and if you know have people who really know what they're doing. And that can be hugely beneficial."*

> *"They're crucial and everyone says, y'know, 'Oh you're on a residential, games and activities all day.' But actually there's so much work that happens in it."*

One-to-one mentoring while outdoors was an especially powerful mix of strategies that helped to further the relationship between young people and staff, which in turn had a positive impact:

> *"A lot of the great work that happens is literally going on a walk in a forest park somewhere, walking, talking, chatting…you're not having to do this intensive eye-contact that we're all trained to do. Do you know like if you're in a car you can talk naturally to people? That's kind of what happens, and then that's where a lot of the learning for the workers happens, 'cause they get to know a lot more about what's going on for the young people 'cause they're not under the spotlight."*

For one project, personal training sessions at an outdoor gym were a key activity that helped to promote young people's personal development:

> *"It's a neutral venue…a couple of the girls that's in the programme like, their mental health has went has went right up…from where it was like, and their whole confidence, y'know because they're in working out… they feel confident now in their own wee bodies."*

Celebration Events

Project staff from several projects emphasised the importance of 'celebration events' when a group complete their project, to showcase the progress that young people have made during their time. Similar to the effect of residentials on programme impact, these celebrations were seen to "cement the change", particularly the change in the young people's confidence. Young people who were said to have been extremely shy and anxious at the beginning of the project "*got up and spoke about their experience on the programme*"; "*and there was one wee boy and he said that it had made a massive difference to his life.*" The example was also given of young men who had created a video focusing on mental health. Having that "*product, something physical*" that they could present and showcase to multiple audiences was said to have "*given them massive confidence*". The events were thought to have had a positive impact on current participants in projects, given the inspirational stories being told.

Youth workers reported that sometimes young people did not want their families to come to the celebration events (*"they just wanted their own wee group")*, but sometimes families came and there was a wider positive impact:

> *"Some families have never left their communities and like now they're in the town watching their kids on stage…you can feel that energy in the room, that this is a really special thing for everybody involved here."*

Some youth workers mentioned that they were appreciative of SEUPB attendance at the celebration events and at other group activities, as it was a sign of support and validation of the youth work practice:

> *"SEUPB have attended some of our events and you know they have actually met with the young people…it was great…the fact that [they] sat in and was meeting the young people and hearing what they had to say for themselves."*

A Good "End" to the Project

Lastly, some youth workers reported that to sustain the progress that young people have made at the end of the programme, they began the process of transitioning onwards quite early, at around four and a half months. For some young people, the purpose was to help them see that they had *"outgrown"* the project, and to help them find something that would enable them to grow further. On the other hand, some youth workers felt that *"[young people] were only getting to know you"* at the end of six months and were not ready to move into something else. Some youth workers were reluctant to call the end of the project *"transitioning out",* because *"a lot of these people are going nowhere… unless we're transitioning them to something, it's not right."* They cited the paperwork they had to do when a project came to an end and other work that was continuing with other groups as factors which made it *"unrealistic"* for them to spend a lot of time developing further pathways for participants. There was a worry that all of the trust and the relationship that had been built with that young person was not being utilised:

> *"I just have issues with that because we're coming in, even if it's only for six months, we're building a bit of a relationship with these people, they're getting to know us, they're getting to trust us, we've all this information on them, we know about them stored in our minds or whatever, and we're not able to tell anyone that to make life a little bit easier for them…it's unethical."*

Summary

The focus groups revealed a few key activities and factors that helped to promote and embed positive changes in the Personal Development, Good Relations, and Citizenship outcomes areas of PEACE4Youth Programme. This included: positive relationships between young people and their youth worker, including one-to-one mentoring; structured days; group work and high levels of

diversity within group work; connecting Good Relations work to the lived experience of young people; residentials; outdoor work; celebration events; and planning for the end of the project.

It should be stated that YouthPact was highlighted within the focus groups as hugely beneficial for supporting, developing, and promoting all of the youth work practice outlined here. Data from the focus groups regarding the positive impact of YouthPact on helping projects achieve their aims is presented in Chapter 8.

Theme 4: The Design of Peacebuilding Programmes

This theme explores elements of the overall design of the PEACE4Youth Programme that influenced how impactful it was, as well as recommendations from the programme staff for the design of future peacebuilding programmes.

High Need Target Group

Staff commented on the type of young person who the PEACE4Youth Programme was aimed at, noting that some young people were dealing will multiple issues such as addiction and other mental health challenges. In addition, some young people needed help with 'basic needs' such as food and shelter. A more frequent issue that seemed to impact many of the young people was anxiety. There was some discussion around whether anxiety was the root of other problems, a symptom of other problems, or sometimes both. There was a sense that the design of the programme was different from previous PEACE programmes as they had to account for these additional needs:

> *"Before you could just sort of look at integration, inclusion and things like that, but nowadays what we're finding is a lot of young people coming through with maybe anxiety."*

> *"So many mental health issues, so many, anxiety is like massive. And how do you separate that from, how d'you separate the cause from the symptom? The young person doesn't invent that or make that up like, that's coming from every aspect of their life."*

> *"Some don't have the ability to have a proper hygiene routine; that are sofa-surfing; that are—so it's, these are the issues you're trying to break down before you can even start actually working as a group."*

Several of the staff interviewed believed that the focus of the programming *'should be on mental health and social difficulties – because that is much more prominent now.'* As such, putting Personal Development at the core of the programme was deemed crucial:

"I think for projects going forward it's, it's to have the resources to put into personal development. One-to-one first and then look at group. And even in a group people still need the one-to-one to develop themselves."

Enrolling in Multiple Projects

Several youth workers raised the issue within the programme design of the restriction on young people participating in multiple PEACE IV-funded projects. One aspect of this issue concerned the developing needs of young people as they move from middle adolescence in school to late adolescence outside of school. One youth worker explained that as all projects have different types of activity, young people's needs at different stages of their adolescence may be met by participating in multiple projects in succession:

"The way that PEACE are looking at the programmes…it's not just a PEACE programme, they're all individual and very different and target young people in very different ways. So if I – I know in [organisation] they took different adults' programmes, whereas if they're doing a programme with me they might want to go onto something else which might be a step up for them, something they generate which is completely youth-led and what way they're involved in the community and stuff, whereas another programme might just be about, y'know, surviving."

Another youth worker discussed the challenge of working with young people who are disengaged in school, who may continue to be disengaged after they leave school and may need more structure in their lives, or that their circumstances change after leaving school, but they will find they are ineligible to join other PEACE projects if they participated in a school-based cohort:

"I think we're going to see this massively with schools groups as well, so we're working with sort of complex young people within a school-based setting, but these kids are going to leave school and they're going to be looking for opportunities like the ones that we're all offering and it's going to go, 'Oh sorry you've already done this programme in school.'"

This youth worker also questioned whether all young people who agree to participate in a (school-based) project have really given their informed consent, if they do not realise that doors to community-based projects will be closed to them upon leaving school:

"Obviously we can do so much in telling young people what they're involved in and what the programme is and we give them that choice whether they want to be involved or not but ultimately the schools are going to go 'actually, you probably need this programme, we're going to put you in the class'. So I worry that maybe a year, two years down the line, young people are going to look for these opportunities and be turned away again. I think PEACE need to very seriously consider what I'm thinking about."

Several youth workers gave examples of young people they had worked with who would have benefitted from further involvement in the PEACE programme after successfully completing one project:

"There's not gonna be nothing there for- to support her, she can't go into any more PEACE teams… That would really beneficial like benefit her to do at least another six months like d'you know. There were a few wee girls in there too that wasn't ready for employment or wasn't ready to go back into education because they didn't- they didn't- they didn't believe in themselves, they didn't have the confidence to say d'you know what I can do it."

Indeed, there was some confusion about the circumstances or criteria under which an argument could be made for allowing a young person to transition into a second PEACE project:

"We had one, we'd one girl that I'm still in contact with from the first, very first cohort, and she's been looking for something like [name of other PEACE project], and I've suggested to her that – 'cause I'm nearly sure… you can make an argument, y'know."

"R1: They have to be out of a peace project for at least two months or something
R2: But they can't go back to the [original PEACE project], like I couldn't take my young people back again
R1: they would have to move on to…somebody like different like."

One youth worker stated that they wanted to be '*trusted*' to make a recommendation in relation to young people's recruitment to successive projects: *'our intentions are what we say they were, and that they're always for the benefit of the young people.'*

Overall Structure

Based on their experiences of the PEACE4Youth Programme and working with young people with a diverse set of needs, youth workers had several recommendations in relation to the overall structure of future peacebuilding programmes, including PEACE Plus. While there was a lot of support for the long-term nature of the PEACE4Youth Programme, one idea was to offer a 6-week programme or a 3-month programme, only leading into a 6-month programme for those who need it or who are ready for that level of commitment:

> *"We're very lucky to have six months because yes you may get a few drop-offs, young people are unpredictable, you're not—you're very unlikely to get the whole group and the whole way through, because life happens. But for to have those six months for young people to even develop…so, I think six months is a good time but obviously it depends on the young person and what they're able for and what they're ready for."*

> *"R1: It's a shame you can't do like a six-week programme leading into the six-month programme*
> *Multiple: Yeah*
> *R1: Even if they're not ready for a six-month programme then we've at least achieved a six-week programme then at least that's something."*

In several of the focus groups, project staff were in favour of programme design that resembled a 'menu' of options for young people; for example, some young people could benefit from being involved in mentoring in a project, whereas that may not suit others. A funded menu of options might help solve the tension between what the funding is for, and what a young person needs to help them develop:

> *"We've one or two as well who completed cohort one that I'm sort of engaging with now nearly like in a mentoring role… So I'm putting the time in and the work in because that's the right thing for those young people [but they aren't counted in our numbers], do you know what I mean, and it would be wrong for us to say 'that isn't part of our core [service] or we can't – do you know what I mean?... we're very value-based workers. At the end of the day that's not going to be recognised in any way in this cohort so it would be nice do y'know, if that was a possibility. At the end of the day the work's happening, do you know what I mean? Because it's, it's, it's the right thing for the young people."*

There was also recognition that for many young people, a structured 6-month project is not required for their level of need; what would however be helpful is a drop-in clinic style of service, or to have someone just available for a chat:

> *"We've had a lot of young people come on board who've been involved in youth and community work throughout the years, but as [name] was saying earlier y'know, support networks aren't there, and everything kinda falls apart."*

> *"There's some young people who won't need to see you like every week or whatever…y'know, they'd build up relationship with – with the staff on the project, and just to have the option of maybe like, can I come in next – or two weeks' time…that's all they need, an hour, an hour and a half a week, that is minimal, and you could do that with mainstream youth clubs that are out there."*

Some youth workers described how they already try to provide this service for young people, or do three or six-month follow-ups to try to see how young people are doing after they leave:

> *"We also leave it open that if they need more support they could come back to us at any point like we've had one or two of the young people just come in for conversations because it's something that they needed, you know, or references, or just to look up something, or look for courses that maybe they'd stopped at a certain point and not got on the course, and then looked for another course and said, 'Can you help me find, this is what I'm looking for?' And we've went, 'Yeah, no problem."*

The recommendation of having one 'link' person for young people was also seen as a way of helping to ensure the sustainability of outcomes:

> *"R1: But if this one person employed by [indistinct] or whoever they are to be the drop-in person five days a week for two hours or whatever gives that continuity, the referring on, they could refer on to you, or you could refer on saying, well now there will be a person – we're not here, but there is going to be a person…when we finish off we'll be saying, now there'll be somebody in [organisation] that will go over and they'll meet you once a week. And it would ensure the sustainability of the work that has been done y'know and…*
> *R2: Absolutely! And it's a link with a person in the community."*

Another youth worker raised the idea of funding fewer projects with future PEACE money, but providing longer-term support for young people until they are fully ready to leave the extra support behind:

> *"I just think if we're getting money – overall a huge amount of money if all the PEACE projects come together and you've got this massive pool of money, I think you maybe need to look at doing less projects but more very good, very in-depth, longer projects, fully resourced, with meaningful outcomes…And not about filling in all this paperwork, and yet we have these young people left, left hanging."*

Indeed, other youth workers spoke of working with some young people who were not ready to leave after six months of a project:

> *"I built her and built her and built her up to the last week…like the transformation from whenever she came in to me to now, and she's still not ready for work…she's progressed but she's still not there, she's - she's getting there."*

> *"The more vulnerable young people and stuff like that, and they'd actually still be in contact, the young people. So we're finding that a wee bit more difficult 'cause six months like they… we change[d] who we're recruiting kind of, 'cause then the young people would have needed more than six months and more one-to-one work or y'know maybe more intense services and stuff like that so they're still in contact and you're not going to not answer the phone to them."*

Exiting

Closely related to the issue of the overall structure of PEACE programmes was the challenge of how to appropriately end young people's involvement. Some described it as a very emotional time for young people (*'[it was] horrendous when that project ended just because they absolutely loved it'*). As previously stated, for many young people, they experienced an intensive programme, but this was followed by a drop to little or no support. Leaving the programme is therefore very challenging, and a careful process of transitioning out might not possible with time constraints:

> *"I think even the, the – well for me anyway it's not necessarily the length of the programme for young people, it's what's moving on after. I don't think there's any space built into it whereas in my experience [indistinct] are saying you have to work eighteen hours a week to do this that and the other, but at the end of the programme, y'know what way you develop*

them on in life, when they finish the programme there's almost a drop, a nosedive, y'know where do they go next? And you can't refer them to another PEACE programme, there's very little you can do, where there's space and time to do that, to work with young people one-to-one and progress them on to something else, whereas you're sort of constrained to do - you have to be doing the eighteen hours group work face-to-face time."

Indeed, as mentioned in the previous sub-theme around building impact, a careful, realistic exit plan should start about halfway through a project:

"The responsibility is on us, but also them, the exit and progression plans… y'know, that process needs to be started almost at the midway point of the group, start exploring ideas, start exploring is there any career interests, is it going to be college, are we going to finish in time for college applications—all those things need to be looked at then so that therefore whenever you're sitting doing a progression plan and an exit plan with a young person it needs to be 100% realistic, because the first time that they see something on that sheet that is unrealistic, the whole thing might as well just be shredded."

Other youth workers reiterated the point about trust and attachment between the young person and their youth worker and how this needs to be carefully considered in the design of the end of a programme. It may take a young person three or more months to build a trusting relationship with their youth worker and then it is nearly time for them to leave. Furthermore, one practitioner stated that there is a risk of young people reverting to old behaviours and 'setting them up for failure' if they do not get a chance to embed new behaviours, as the transformation was sometimes only evident after 3 or 6 months as they become more comfortable, but then they had to leave the programme. This could have an even bigger negative impact, as they may feel abandoned by someone they trusted:

"And I think it is –we're lucky in [organisation], the organisation gives us the flexibility to be able, we have a window of about eight to nine months that we're able to do like a lead-in few months where it's just one-to-ones or smaller subgroups or getting, overcoming barriers before it's meeting the full group, and then that block of six months of full group work and then a drop-in month at the end or whatever through the progression. Now the organisation has that luxury of being able to have that flexibility like, but it is key, it's, it's – and it's a nosedive, it's the biggest fear, and unfortunately it's something we see again and again and again, of the reverting right back to the behaviours, and it's almost like PEACE really needs

to hear this and really needs to listen to it because, what's the point then, do you know, it's a tokenistic, tick box that you've done and it's not the reality like."

"It's just showing them what they can be but not giving them the opportunity to do that."

"R1: It's the way it's designed. It isn't designed for consistency, and building trust. Y'know it's, it's getting hours, 'cause it takes a long time to get the trust built up to begin with and then that person's just taken away from them
R2: Well yeah that's what we found as well like y'know six months isn't…
F1: You're only beginning!
F3: And that's why they can't leave! Because actually they haven't, they haven't achieved whatever they were going to – in their own goals and their own sense of it isn't right, they're not ready to leave."

"Young people are like, 'They don't care about me [indistinct],' you know—first opportunity, 'they're running off on me again, that's me I'm done, I'm dropped out.'"

Leaving after a school-based project was described as especially hard for some young people, because when the project stopped their engagement with school stopped, resulting in a reversion to some negative behaviours:

'That's something we kinda found as well, we - so our programmes in the schools are kind of split over the, kind of split over two school years, we do have the work in the summer, finishing off and then starting off again in August with the school, but the – but their first sort of batch of young people through one of the schools, attendance had shot up…most of them had full attendance, so as the programme stopped, attendance dropped, things started happening again, [indistinct] was kicking in again . So then our workers are having to go out and do a transition period, and that's being used as that work to try and support them as opposed to being able to refer over to y'know the likes of [other programmes] outside of the school environment, y'know longer term whatever, and it's restrictive that way, do y'know longer term impact.'

Family Involvement

Youth workers reported that family or parental/guardian involvement differs by group – some have little or no engagement in the life of the project, while in other groups parents might have a *'massive say'*. The differing levels of involvement of families (and youth workers' descriptions of family

difficulties told to them by parents/guardians and young people) perhaps speaks to the finding of no change/distance travelled on the programme indicator of 'more positive family relations'. Nonetheless, there was a sense that when the family buy into the programme it can have a positive impact:

> *"I think it's a really big part of then knowing what they're involved in as well and hearing their view on what maybe their idea for their young person is or, yeah. It's good for them to get to see our faces and know who we are and we're not teachers as well y'know."*

For some groups where young people have special needs, this is even more important: In some cases, parents of vulnerable young people helped to design the programme of activity:

> *"[Parents were] there at our initial meeting and we were really sort of questioned about, in a positive way, about sort of what the programme's going to be like and what we're going to be doing …But we've actually, we turned that on its head as well and we said to the parents, well come ahead then and help us plan the programme, you know your young people better than us so why aren't you being involved in that decision-making process and, so I think we're going to see maybe something come out of that which will be, be nice."*

One youth worker discussed how the impact of the programme would be more meaningful with whole family involvement, but numbers in PEACE are too big to do that:

> *"Our core programme which is separate from PEACE altogether, we do have the youth work, the teaching and the family support happening, and it makes the connection a whole lot more meaningful. With this our numbers are far too big to give the family support to work with that it needs as well as hitting your twelve hours per three groups per week y'know it's, it's too much to be able to give it the attention that it needs. It feels kinda like it's just y'know skimmed over, quick check-ins with phone calls."*

Indeed, a few youth workers described instances where family members have come to them to ask for additional help and support in relation to their relationship with the young person, or that they were aware of problems that parents were experiencing that were then impacting on the young person:

> *"[The young person] is frustrated and [has] communication issues and bullying issues and they're not succeeding, maybe their own expectations of themselves isn't what the reality is*

happening at school and they haven't got the friends network they thought, so they actually take it out on the parents and the mothers would be quite afraid – two or three of the mothers are quite afraid of the young person. Y'know, and if a father was there maybe that wouldn't be – I've had fathers had to be rang at work to come in and sort out a situation and they're ringing us, I can't be at this, I can't do this anymore, y'know.

"So there's there is generational – separation, alcohol abuse…Alcohol and drug abuse yeah, but it's more with the parents for us rather than the young person."

To help embed the impact, a recommendation from several staff was to employ an extra worker whose job it is to engage families:

"It depends on the parent, who's at home, whether they're for the programme or whether they're a negative influence but the time you need to put in to try and work with that relationship as well I mean you're trying to do so much just to get young people through the door to do their one-to-ones, group work, training and everything else, y'know, and that to me takes a backseat. Sometimes it is more [indistinct] than others but you really need to, you would need an extra worker sometimes to try and engage with families all through the programme, you really would."

"I've worked with a programme before and it was, it offered a more holistic approach do y'know what I mean, but it had a family support team and a youth support team, so you had a team who was concentrating on all the young people and then a team who was concentrating on family support and they met and y'know collaborated together whatever to try and work out what would be best for a young person and the family together."

Targets and Data Capture

It was evident that programme staff felt a level of frustration about the requirement of recruiting a target balance of 40% young people from a Catholic background, 40% young people from a Protestant background, and 20% young people from an Other background into the projects. Many staff explained that different groups of young people want to self-identify as 'Other' for multiple reasons. For some, saying they are 'Other' is a statement of removal from the perceived inefficacy of the political process (*I think they feel completely removed and they don't have any faith in the political process*). For some it was viewed as a more passive action, as they claim they *'don't care'* about being from one community background or another, or see it as completely irrelevant to their lives; for others still, stating themselves as 'Other' is due to not wanting to be associated with religion

– this is felt to be particularly the case for some LGBTQ young people in their cohorts ('*they're very like, "I don't associate with religion at all because religion hates us"*'). A common reason for the high number of young people identifying as 'Other' was thought to be due to young people feeling that to openly identify as 'Catholic/Nationalist' or 'Protestant/Unionist' was to position themselves in opposition to the community that was different to them, and was therefore a 'sectarian' stance and not a marker of civic pluralism:

> *"They're like, 'I don't want to associate myself because that's the, maybe to do with the Troubles or, y'know us against them,' and they say, 'Oh I've loads of Protestant friends but I was born a Catholic,' and vice versa or whatever, but they see if they label themselves as one thing, then maybe automatically they don't accept the other."*

There was *'a fear of being labelled as sectarian'*, even if *'there is a lot more young people that we work with that are sectarian'*. Youth workers had a sense therefore that asking young people about their community background when they first met them was often not capturing accurate information. They had seen young people '*hesitating*' to disclose their background information, and often needed to build up a relationship of trust with their youth worker before feeling comfortable to do so:

> *"Young people see that form as asking them if they are loyalist/republican, they know the norm is that sectarianism is bad, they don't want to seen as sectarian as a loyalist or whatever and are not ready to disclose that, they don't know you…whenever they see a form that basically is asking them, 'Are you a Loyalist?' It's like, 'No I'm not.' Especially when it's your first meeting with the young person. It's like, 'Hang on, you want me to tell you that?"*

> *"There is that element of, 'I'm going to tell you what you want to hear.' In, especially in this country there is a fear of being labelled one way or the other. So I think there's a lot of Other-s that are being ticked, not because of, 'I don't care about this, this is in the past.' There's a lot of Other-s being ticked because, 'I don't actually believe that this form is anonymous.'"*

Some youth workers described how, as time went on with project activities, young people who described themselves as 'Other' at the beginning of the project later feel more at ease to talk about their opinions and discuss them with those who are from a different background, or to disclose sectarian behaviours that they hadn't disclosed before:

"You go from people sort of going, 'I don't want to be anything,' to, 'This is who I am,' type of thing, it creates a real…it sort of shows you, ok this is what this young person's identifying as and you see that their views come across quite strongly in groups as well when we're talking about certain things—which is great."

"What happens is, as your relationship builds, y'know when it comes to survey two or survey three, 'Well I can't say I'm Loyalist or I'm sectarian now because I said at the start of it that I wasn't.' And, y'know as well it's—it's that fear, it's just that fear, you'll see those opinions start to come out a wee bit in the group chats."

Another youth worker described how, as good relations work is made relevant for young people, they change their view from seeing community background as something that *'means nothing to them that was your problem'* to understanding the impact of their own actions:

"A couple of them have said to us, when we're younger, yeah [sectarian behaviour] is something to pass the time… but as you grow older you kind of grow out of it."

In one discussion with youth workers, there was a feeling that there was a wide deviation in identity strength amongst the young people in the programme - those who do state an identity say they feel strongly about that identity, and those who don't state being from a particular community background feel strongly that it is the case - it is *'one or the other.'*

A further issue with the accuracy of the data capture regarding community background was in relation to young people who were born abroad not being sure of what to be recorded as:

"The international students wouldn't have a clue and the, some of them were Protestants and you would never have known… but y'know you're going to have to get them to tick one or – and y'know a lot of them are 'Other' because a lot of them don't, don't care…they shouldn't have to tick which one they are just because we need the numbers and the stats for it like."

Defining Outcomes
Good Relations
As described earlier in this chapter, youth workers reported that some young people find it hard to talk about their identity because they don't have the confidence to talk about their identity. They felt that gaining confidence and independent thinking around identity, was an important positive

indicator, for both young people born in Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland or other non-Western countries:

> *"Like, asking their identity was quite difficult for them…to extricate themselves from the family, from the mother, from the what they – like…it's the culture, they control the young person, that the young person does what the parent says, even though they're over eighteen…they're constantly checking and not sure of their own opinion of their own likes and dislikes, of their reasons for doing anything, because they're always checking checking checking that that's ok with an adult, and we're [indistinct] 'cause we're living in a, in a Western culture, and y'know we're not used to being told what to do from nearly sixteen on. There's that separation happening from the parent and the families and they're establishing their own identity. We have eighteen and nineteens and twenty – they haven't got that sense because they're coming from an Indian culture or a Pakistani culture or y'know they're told what to think, they're told what to do, they're told who to be. So that's equally as detrimental as coming from a home where y'know parents [don't]."*

Overall, youth workers reported that young people's knowledge of their own identity is low:

> *"What I've found is that they don't have any kind of real understanding or meaning to kind of those group labels, y'know they say, 'I'm Catholic,' or 'I'm Protestant,' but whenever you ask them what does that mean…"*

As stated in the sub-theme around factors influencing impact, Good Relations work was also said to the influenced by the context outside of the programme, including residential segregation. For one youth worker, an indicator of positive change would be measuring feelings of fear about going into a community that was not their own, particularly after the project ends:

> *"The boys from the Catholic community did say that they'd probably never be back on the estate again… it was only for that reason [project activity] that they were going in and they did still feel intimidated…they lived right beside there and they couldn't use them facilities because they felt intimidated."*

Personal Development

As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, one of the key issues that almost every youth worker interviewed mentioned was levels of anxiety amongst the young people recruited into their projects. One youth worker mentioned that it would be worthwhile tracking young people's generalised anxiety

levels as they go through the programme, '*you know so it shows the, almost every aspect of their lives is kind of ruled from that anxiety.*'

An indicator that was associated with these high anxiety levels was low self-confidence and a reluctance to go out and try new things. Turning these things around was a sign of progress:

> *"You find that's one of the major things you work on with the young people is their confidence…confidence, self-esteem, yeah….you can see over the course of the cohort you know just how their confidence is building."*

> *"There's a few that I've had in my group who have dropped out of school for whatever reason, whether it be mental health, anxiety, trauma, anything like that—and they've isolated themselves, so they're not going out, they're not getting involved in things. So, when you meet them first time they're…like they have all these nerves and stuff and you're trying to unpack it—you're going, well why don't you give it a try, but there's about ten voices in their head saying, no don't because this is what's going to happen and stuff like that so it's trying to get them out of their comfort zone."*

Related to trying new experiences was resilience-building, challenging family norms about opportunities open to them, and developing independence of thought:

> *"But it's a whole different world now than it was for them and we're having young people coming through and you're sitting going, y'know what about getting a job and what about building your self-esteem and your confidence and things like that there but then they're going home to maybe things that are saying y'know, ah you just need to do this and don't worry about that and y'know, on benefits and things like that there and we're sort of trying to tackle that now….It's that way of thinking that maybe is within the family and the rest of us are going, ok how do we tackle that without sort of going that's wrong, y'know or that's not the way you should be thinking—how do we sort of go, ok you are capable of a lot more than this."*

Another aspect of developing independent thinking was related to developing self-awareness, an understanding of one's own identity, and being comfortable to discuss their own identity with others (the latter perhaps also being an indicator of support for a 'positive' model of peace in a post-conflict society). It was suggested that some of the anxiety experienced by young people partly comes from not knowing where they belong, or what they stand for:

"The biggest thing I would say I've probably noticed is kinda the, the need or the desire to find some kind of identity…'I believe this because my granda told me this'…there is awareness about mental health issues and identity issues and like LGBT issues and things like that, so fantastic for raising awareness and acceptance of that, but I think there's something where people kind of feel a wee bit lost in all that as well, ehm and they're trying to find what kinda crowd they belong with, what kinda group, their identity, where they fit in. And I think at least a lot of the time they're going on to more superficial identities and they're struggling to find a kinda deeper meaning to it then and whereabouts they fit in and with that there's elements of anxiety with that too."

Citizenship Outcomes

Within the focus groups, there was some discussion about what progression and achievement looked like in terms of citizenship outcomes. The discussions resulted in some debate about the meaning of being an 'active citizen' in a community. For some, progression in citizenship was to further one's understanding of inequalities and injustices in society, linking this deepened understanding to the programme's Good Relations outcomes, and to actively work to redress inequalities:

"As part of [citizenship] we are stripping back where's the power structures here and we're stripping back where's the religious inequality in housing, why is that, and stripping that all way way back, so all of a sudden we have working class Protestants fighting for more social housing in Nationalist areas 'cause that's where the need is y'know, and they're understanding it on a whole different level, but it's taking that time like and stripping that all back…If we're talking about citizenship that's exactly it, I mean PEACE are asking us to do citizenship and I think a lot of people maybe just quick to tick a box y'know they've done a bit of volunteering."

In addition to recognising injustices and inequalities, other indicators of Citizenship progression included developing young people's confidence and courage to speak out about injustices, and to and critically question everything - including the PEACE programme and other societal structures:

"For me, citizenship is massive, creating young activists… those young people realise that there are social injustices that they are allowed to have a say on and that they can change [what's] happening 'cause that's the stuff that PEACE really should be highlighting because

this is fundamentally one of the biggest parts of this programme, well one of the biggest successes I've seen from speaking to PEACE workers across the board that we're creating a group of young people that are ready to 'stick it to the man' and I love that."

While there was some scepticism about the potential for 'box-ticking' in regard to Citizenship indicators, such as participation in different civic events and projects, there was sense that tracking how much young people are using services in their own communities is an indicator of their civic engagement, and potentially, of their capacity to find out about services within their community. One youth worker gave the following example:

"With both my groups, we researched all the services within the city and we did like- we did- wee visits to each one of them and each young person had a wee question to ask them and stuff and the last group really enjoyed that because some of them were young parents, and they didn't realise that there was a creche right in their community, they would take their children for two days a week for two hours. They didn't even know that, but the fact that then we researched it and we visited y'know them and stuff like that and, like their children now is in crèche."

Measuring and Capturing Success

Programme staff discussed some of their thoughts around the way that success is measured and captured. There was a general impression that the impact of the work is sometimes hard to capture in outputs and numbers, or that the impact can be lost in its translation into numbers. To this end, there was a recommendation that the evaluation process included more case studies of young people's journeys:

"Some of the success stories we have alone with our group is fascinating and amazing and kind of spurs us on a wee bit to keep going but sometimes it kind of feels devalued in the process and the coldness of the numbers."

For this reason, showcasing success stories during the celebration events was regarded as critical by staff. Other creative methods of evaluation feedback were highlighted as further possibilities, including videos and stories that young people make in the process of their activities. These were thought to show progression in personal development in particular:

"We can obviously write reports or [take] photographs but we thought maybe if it was possible even to be able to submit videos since that's what the products are…they don't - they can't- so they can't actually see the young people's outcome of their work."

"Whenever I used to first produce cameras and video- video cameras and stuff they don't- they don't - a lot of them don't want to do that unless they feel confident, they don't want to be part of it, but then as the weeks progress you can see that they are having like - getting ideas for stories and they want to share so it's 'cause it's really just like a platform for their voice…as we talk and as we go through the weeks and we're talking about different themes and issues and you can see that they are getting passionate about it and then they want to. So really for us it is personal development throughout."

"The shared reading sometimes can be – a lot of young people maybe find it a bit like school to start with but, it's trying to get them to open up and then talk about feelings through short stories talking about their own feelings through a character in short stories so they find that very helpful…they can tell their own stories."

A further issue with the measurement that was raised was who counts as a 'successful' programme leaver. Multiple situations were discussed where some young people had perhaps gone into full-time employment after a few months of participation, or had caring responsibilities or their own health issues and were not counted in project numbers because they didn't have the required number of hours before they left the programme. Youth workers were also keen to stress that for some young people, even a short-term engagement could be viewed as a positive achievement, especially for those who had high levels of anxiety about leaving their home environment and meeting new people. As such, there was a sense that there could be a more flexible way in the design of the programme to account for and recognise the participation of young people who left before the target number of hours.

One youth worker described the pressure they felt regarding the overall design of the current programme in terms of the targets and desired outcomes:

"I think this is a very demanding job for what it places on youth workers in terms of the numbers and I've never worked in a job where I felt so under pressure in terms of recruitment. When I'm thinking about sort of my job is to plan a good supportive programme for young people and something that supports them in their day-to-day and you feel like

> *sometimes you could be compromising that a wee bit for the sake of PEACE's outcomes, and what they're expecting. Which is very hard."*

This theme has highlighted several youth workers' concerns, considerations, and recommendations regarding the design of the current PEACE4Youth Programme as well as future peacebuilding programmes. They spoke of the need for in-depth consideration around the high level of mental health needs and other deep needs of the target group of young people; there were concerns about the restriction on young people enrolling in multiple PEACE IV funded projects; the overall structure of programming was also discussed in terms of time-frame and perhaps a need for a broader 'menu' of programme options available to young people; recommendations for successful transitioning and exiting out of the programme were also presented; options for deeper family involvement in future programming were discussed; concerns about the way that young people's community background is recorded and the targets regarding community background were raised; youth workers had recommendations for how to define and measure progress on the Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship indicators, and more general recommendations around the programme evaluation methodology.

Summary

The focus groups conducted in 2019 and 2020 with programme staff revealed the extent of the huge efforts and commitment that had gone into making a swift and creative move into online delivery for participants in the advent of lockdown in March 2020. In all respects of the programme, staff were doing what they could, working long hours (sometimes at risk of burnout), to engage young people and create a positive impact, even though much of the programme impact has previously been attributed to factors that involve face-to-face experiences. Young people's levels of engagement with online activities were reported as varied for different reasons, but by quickly developing their expertise and using multiple methodologies (often because of the sharing of ideas between professionals about promoting engagement), this filtered into a mainly positive experience for many young people, despite them missing certain key experiences such as residentials and celebration events. Youth workers believed that online delivery would likely form part of their delivery for the foreseeable future (and indeed, that despite the challenges of online engagement, there were some key benefits in doing so). As such, there is a need now for further clarity about best practice for online delivery in relation to the different outcome areas, as well as expectations from SEUPB about verification of activities and online contact hours.

CHAPTER 11: Phase II Drawing to a Close: Focus Group Findings

Thematic analysis yielded five main themes incorporating several subthemes. Participants discussed the overall factors that promoted recruitment, engagement and retention in the programme. As the programme was coming to an end at the time of the focus groups, participants expressed their views on the closure of the programme and the effects it may have on young people and staff members. Reflecting on their experiences, participants discussed the lasting impact and sustainability of the programme moving forward. Finally, recommendations for improvements in future programmes were also highlighted.

Theme 1: Key Factors Promoting Recruitment, Engagement, and Retention

Focusing on the overall successes of the programme, youth workers discussed the recruitment and engagement of young people on the programme and the factors that contributed to this. Although recruitment was *"really hard"* at the initial stage of the programme, recruitment, engagement, attendance and retention in the programme were perceived by the youth workers as successful overall. They attributed this to the programme gaining a positive reputation among young people and their families. Positive experiences with project activities and experiences with others facilitated word-of-mouth promotion of the programme whereby participants and their families encouraged others to join the projects. As one youth worker stated, *"they're [the young people] very keen to come in"*. Similarly, the schools began contacting the programme to refer certain students to the projects. Because of a building, positive reputation, projects were successful recruiting and retaining young people even throughout the pandemic.

> *"…even throughout the pandemic, which was an interesting point for us to make as well as how we were still able to recruit onto the programme through the pandemic and didn't impact our ability to recruit new participants and young people were still wanting to take part whether that was down to boredom or through word of mouth or genuine interest or they signed into the programme and completed it as well throughout the pandemic".*

Tangible Qualifications

An additional factor perceived to be a key contributing factor to success in recruitment, engagement, attendance, and retention was the OCN qualification. The OCN qualification incentivised young

people to sign up and remain involved because it was a *'tangible'* qualification rather than soft skills such as *'teamwork'*, which they could see and understand its value. The OCN qualification encouraged schools to promote and support the projects more because they saw that it was something accredited that their students could benefit from. This support translated into many of the projects being delivered in schools. Additionally, parents were more supportive of their children participating in the programme for these same reasons.

> *"The two things that jump out to me would be, we delivered an OCN qualification…that was equivalent to GCSE grade B, and that was definitely very helpful for us for recruiting young people".*

Financial Incentives

The financial incentives, as well as free lunch and transportation, played an essential role in the engagement and retention of young people in the projects. These made the programme more accessible and allowed young people who may be otherwise discouraged from attending or signing up in the first place to join in and keep the attendance high.

> *"…what was great about the programme, for me it was incentive payments, hmm, we would have worked with young people hmm, living in hostels and you know they really relied on the additional kind of money and also for us having that budget I think it's really important for young people in terms of being able to buy them food, we are honestly going into some foyers, and young people had not ate. You know, so the most important thing there was to ensure they had food, and that is not, you know it's no exaggeration. Some young people had £5, which was a loaf and pasta and tin of beans or whatever it might be, just to keep them all week. So, like you know, as much as you see it as like a carrot, it's also the basic needs of some of our young people, they just don't have.".*

Funding Enables Longevity

Youth workers discussed the funding commitment as a contribution to the programme being successful as it was fundamental in achieving the programme's outcomes. The funding was perceived as essential in facilitating the longevity of the projects, which was noted as a *'unique'* and integral part of the project's success in allowing youth enough time to build relationships with one another and youth workers. Additionally, the longevity allowed youth workers necessary facetime to impact young people's lives through personal and group mentoring, lessons, and support.

It was discussed that funding for other non-PEACE4Youth projects is often lacking, which results in these projects being *'sporadic'* and last for a short duration – 6-12 weeks *'if you're very lucky'* – with

only one session a week. On the other hand, PEACE IV funding facilitated more time-commitment of staff members, enabling projects to have multiple sessions a week. This intensity and longevity were considered necessary for making meaningful, lasting changes and impact on young people's lives, which was only possible through the PEACE IV funding. Another critical success of the project was the flexibility within budgets for youth workers to personalise and hone the project to what would best benefit young people.

> *"The longevity of working with the young people for 9 months to a year really meant that you built such great relationships with the young people, and they had a chance to build great relationships with each other. And it was a project unlike any other projects I have been involved in before or since and with the intensity of time and involvement with young people, they had to come and be involved in maybe 3 to 4 sessions a week with us, so kinda covered so much ground with them in such a short time. And it meant you just had like a really solid base to build upon [INT: right], and with young people. So, it just meant that they had so much time and I think support from us to flourish".*

Additionally, the funding and the related longevity of the project allowed youth workers to gain valuable experience, skills, and training that they may not have had access to otherwise and to build upon and develop those skills. The programme has also been highly beneficial in employing many youth workers and provided them with longer-term job stability.

> *"I think it's good in terms of what we're taking away as youth workers is massive, it's so, so important, you know, in times when young people needed people, youth workers were there, willing to do online sessions and do drop-ins and facilitate whatever they needed at the time, deliver what was needed far and beyond. So, I think there's something in that, that was quite unique about youth work that we were willing to do that and put ourselves at risk to go on and do that with young people. I think what we're taking in those skills and that flexibility and that attitude towards how we do our job, and hopefully, take it a bit more seriously as professionals rather than just youth workers, you're professional youth workers which is a key".*

The funding facilitated access to workshops and diversity that the young people may not have access to otherwise, such as 'Small Worlds', which helps break down stereotypes and increase multicultural understanding—in other words, achieving the programme's objective of Good Relations.

Close Relationships

Youth workers discussed that a crucial aspect of the programme's success was the quality relationships built between youth workers and young people and those between the young people. These relationships were necessary for the recruitment, retention and engagement of young people and achieving the programme's objectives. A youth worker quoting young people stated that the relationships gave them the necessary confidence to participate in the programme and go on to other programmes or future endeavours. Additionally, the support from these relationships helped young people realise they are capable of much more than they initially realised. Without longevity or time commitment, these relationships would not have been able to thrive.

> *"…if a young person was involved for the 9 months, say XXX and I were then working with another cohort of young people when the previous cohort was still about in the youth centre and were still able to see us, and we were still able to kinda support them in some way, and I think the longevity of working in one place kinda help that".*

It was stated that some young people came from disrupted homes or lacked 'that security or stability in their home lives', and youth workers were there to provide that safe space, consequently impacting other aspects such as their personal development.

> *"I think one of the basic things that youth workers provide is just being there for the young person. A lot of people don't, have that security or stability in their home lives and then you know… whenever we say we're going to be there, we're there, you know. If they don't turn up, phone them, and having that person in their life you know, could have a big impact on them, on their own self-belief and their value and all sorts of things".*

Mentoring

Youth workers discussed that one-to-one mentoring played a significant role in the programme's success. It facilitated the programme in achieving its objectives. One youth worker stated that *'Sometimes it's just showing them a pathway that they didn't know existed a lot of the times'.* Although the option to engage in mentoring was vital, it was not compulsory. Some young people engaged in weekly mentoring sessions, whilst some did not avail this opportunity, and others only sporadically attended. Mentoring allowed meaningful relationships to flourish and increased young people's confidence in attending youth group activities or other future endeavours. Mentors not only provided personalised support in life-related crises or difficulties, but they also helped young people with their CV, job searching and interview preparation for jobs.

> *"…sometimes you are really having quite a lot of one-to-one support for certain young people but it, I think we all saw the benefit of that at the end of the qualification. And for me, the other really key element of the project was mentoring. So, some of our participants may be only*

attended one or two mentoring sessions over the course of the project. Others were attending weekly mentoring sessions. And for me, that was just a fantastic way of supporting young people at whatever stage of life they were at or whatever circumstances they were going through. So, for some young people, it was just a weekly check-in and for some, it was maybe provided like tailored assistance so like XXX said about jobs or preps for CV or for interviews".

Training, Networking, and Flexibility

It was expressed that an essential factor in the programme's success was due to youth workers' ability to adopt a flexible approach to working with young people at the individual or group levels. It was highlighted that youth workers needed to be '*adaptable, approachable, and flexible'* as they were often faced with unique situations. Young people's needs varied, and sometimes these needs changed from day to day. However, the programme's flexible approach enabled them to do whatever *'was the right thing to do'* to support young people in reaching their goals.

Similarly, a unique attribute of the programme vital to its success was mentioned to be the 'laid back approach' in working with young people compared to other courses. Youth workers felt that a relaxed approach put less pressure on young people and allowed space for strong and supportive relations to develop that kept them engaged in the programme. Youth workers adapted to young people's needs and met them where they felt most comfortable.

> *"I suppose with young people, there's no… that's where we're different, in a more laid-back approach, we're different than maybe a childcare course or a health and social care course, we're more relaxed. And if we know there's something going on in a young person's life, we're not pressurising them you know if they're not able to attend that day or that week we can adapt and say look, stay at home, we can email you out the lessons you know there's no pressure on the young person until they're feeling up to it. And as XXX says, sometimes it's going out to the young person's, meeting them out of the youth centre, out of the college environment".*

> *"I suppose we've been really innovative. We've used the online measures, we've went out into the community to meet young people within their own safe spaces where they're comfortable, and we've kind of used interventions to phase them into the broader group, so we have been, as a team, we have been innovative, when they face setbacks, we have been trying to engage them.*

A Focus on Personal Development

The youth workers agreed that the projects overall have been *'really beneficial for the young people'*. One youth worker stated that *'… overall, generally there's a lot of really positive outcomes'*. Another commented, *'they're [young people] so respectful of each other as well and I think that's something so good that has really come out of the programme'.* Similarly, another staff member stated, *'I would say 99% of the targets from our end were achieved'.*

> *"…we seem to have majority or a lot of them would have good success stories out of it. You know where they'll move on to something, and they're you know, and I'm sure with you guys they got into college or like… I definitely see a lot of ones that have came through the programmes that are on doing other programmes, that are doing very well for themselves".*

Encouraging young people's personal development was viewed as a key success in the programme. The skills young people gained were highlighted as communication skills, time-management, teamwork, career aptitude, citizenship, responsibility, and civic engagement through volunteering. Youth workers were confident in young people's progression with their personal development skills, but their views wavered concerning their development in Citizenship and Good Relations aspects, which seemed related to ambiguity around their definitions:

> *"I think Personal Development, 100%, that was a main part of our project. The Good Relations I think… [INT: hm hm], Good Relations is quite a broad theme and when it comes to Northern Ireland [INT: hm hm] it sticks around orange and green [INT: hm hm], and a lot of it doesn't take into account disabilities or LGBTQ, or you know, the social action, like for example we had a young offenders' group who done like an introduction pack for the young people being moved into the Simon Community. To me at that point, I thought that's not Good Relations, but it is Good Relations, you know, so the themes were hit, but without the staff may be unaware a lot of the time they were hitting the themes, yeah Citizenship you know all of them were hit".*

Theme 2: Challenges in the Final Phases of the Programme

The overall, fundamental challenges, and particularly those faced in the final phase of the programme, were explored by staff members during focus groups.

The Process of Recruitment

Although Covid-19 was a key obstacle in recruitment at the final phase, other challenges included individual life circumstances, recruitment timing, and rigid project hours expectations. Certain individual life circumstances negatively influenced both recruitment success and bringing people together in the programme, online and in person. People who were from rural places, people from the criminal justice system, and people from judicial setups such as social welfare often had a lot of

anxiety, and it was hard to recruit and bring them together. Recruiting while simultaneously *'running a cohort'* was also challenging throughout the programme. Some youth workers mentioned that they had to manage two other groups around the same time as recruiting a group, which was challenging.

> *"… one of the challenges that stick out for me, within the programme we have a thing that when a group is finished they do transition mentoring, ehm and then another groups starts, so probably the overlap of groups at any one, there's only a small few weeks, but in them small few weeks, you might be recruiting for a new programme, mentoring a group and then starting a new group, so there's nearly three different aspects going on at the one time…".*
> *"Well, by the time we had finished mentoring with one group, we were so attached to them, [Yeah]. You know you couldn't just put them to the side or whatever. But you also had to recruit and get on with new groups and you know you just had to get on with it, you know".*

The timing of recruitment was also tricky as recruitment took place around the same time when other non-peace projects were recruiting. *"Then if we were all recruiting at the same time, it's like other colleges or other programmes".* However, one youth worker pointed out that it is hard to know what time of the year is a good time for recruitment.

> *"If you kind of, if you hit it around, if we start it up around October time, it was usually ok because they nearly started trying something in the college and then it wasn't working out and then we could take them to the end of the academic year. But it, but maybe then if we were like recruiting forward year or around this time of the year or something. And so that there is a bit of a challenge".*

Recruiting and running cohorts across multiple geographical locations was challenging. But a specific concern which was raised repeatedly was the rigid project hour expectations. Some young people who would be good fits for the programme did not join because of the inflexible, intensive time commitment. Additionally, many participants had to drop out of the programme because they had other commitments such as school, university, or jobs. This ties into the theme of challenges in achieving targets and meeting funders' expectations.

> *"Over the course of 9 months, it might be OK for some young people but for young people who maybe have part-time jobs or they are studying or in school or like local college or potentially university, that's a lot of hours to fit in. For some young people, it just doesn't really interest them. They heard great things about the project and once they realised how much commitment was involved, it wasn't for them, which is so understandable, I think".*

General Project Layout and Process

More generally, programme design and layout were noted as significant challenges. Some issues highlighted were related to the transition process between cohorts, paperwork, programme length, the timings of cohorts' participation, the inability to refer eligible participants to other PEACE IV projects, incentive payment inequity, and the Queen's survey. A lack of funder's understanding of obstacles related to young peoples' needs and the rigid project hours expectations held by the funders were also expressed.

Paperwork was a *'challenge in itself'* which split youth workers' time, attention, and energy. A *'heavy expectation of paperwork'* took away staff contact time with young people. This caused pressure and stress for youth workers, and they felt rushed and engaged *'half-heartedly'* in their duties.

Although the length of the programme was highlighted as a strength in comparison to other youth work projects, youth workers still felt strongly that more time in the programme would prove to be very beneficial for participants. Youth workers felt that participants' time in the programme ended right as they were beginning to get *'into the swing of being part of the group'* and that an extra month or more would let participants truly *'hit their stride'* and would strengthen the programme and outcomes. This was highlighted as particularly challenging in the immigrant groups as the cultural differences and trust-building were obstacles for them to open up and engage. These young people may need more support due to having dealt with traumatic home lives, staying in many direct provision centres, and may meet the criteria for PTSD. Youth workers stated that the project ended just when these young people were opening up.

> *"Before they'd even come into the college, so they could nearly, just as they're getting into the swing of being part of the group, you know that way, it ends. Whereas I nearly think if there was an extra month or two at the end of that they would really hit their stride kind of thing".*

Another challenge in the programme was the inability to provide incentive payments for participants who lived across the border in the Republic of Ireland. '[I]*t was definitely an issue there that young people were treated differently'* with incentive payments.

A key, recurring hardship was youth workers' inability to refer young people to other PEACE IV projects. This was especially challenging when youth workers felt that another PEACE IV project would best suit some young people's needs, but they could not refer them because they had already participated in one project. This obstruction caused young people to miss valuable opportunities and halted their progression. In one case, a youth worker felt strongly that a particular PEACE IV project would benefit a young person and put together an argument so an allowance could be made for him

to join another PEACE IV project. However, they expressed shock when their proposal was turned down. This was considered particularly problematic considering many PEACE IV projects were delivered in schools, and participants joined those not knowing about the availability of other projects and without knowing that they would be unable to participate in other PEACE IV projects if they wished to. Consequently, young people did *'not [get] the choice in what Peace project [was] right for them'.*

> *"Heroes would be perfect for you, but we can't —and the young person is going, but why, you know, but it could be the perfect thing for them but then they're missing out and that's kinda halting their own progression until you can find something close to it but the perfect thing's right there you know".*

Targets and Expectations of Funders

A commonly mentioned challenge was felt to be unrealistic expectations and a lack of understanding from the funders regarding young people's needs and situations. The rigid high expectations of contact hours were challenging during and after the pandemic as it was difficult to bring young people together online and in person. Staff felt unable to explain to the funders why some participants were unable or unwilling to meet both online and in-person, particularly during and following the pandemic. It seemed that the funders did not understand that many participants would not have access to the necessary technology, such as Wi-Fi or computers, to participate online or that some participants would feel less inclined to participate online or would not want to turn on their cameras. It was also geographically difficult to bring people together as well, with large distances between projects that would make it difficult or impossible for participants to join in person. These things also affected contact hours; another area where a lack of understanding from the funders was felt, in addition to participant outcome expectations.

> *"Although I understand that there has to be targets and targets have to be met, and so on, 249 [hours] was just sometimes not possible or young people left early, so one of the things that I am very vocal about is how young people who maybe attended 200, 225 hours and if they left to get a job or for another reason that they were not counted as a completer which I feel was very unfair and there needs to be some allowance for that. So don't get me wrong, if a young person comes only for a few weeks and attends 30, 40 or 50 hours and leaves, that's understandable, but there was this, there was this line if they didn't get 249, they weren't counted, and it wasn't taken into account that the young people who had journeyed through the programme and had completed up to 180 to 240 hours and I just think there needs to be some sort of in-between allowance that depend on how they progress, should*

they be allowed to be counted as a completer because that was very, it was soul-destroying for the staff who has worked with these young people and all of a sudden they weren't allowed to count them and then the pressure of the target throughout the programme".

Youth Workers' Personal Challenges

Youth workers themselves experienced personal challenges in the projects, such as mental and emotional health struggles, taking home extensive amounts of work, job insecurity, and feeling stressed and pressured about reaching target project hours. They worked closely with many young people facing myriad difficulties, including self-harm, drug and alcohol abuse, suicidal ideation, traumatic and unstable home lives, and who likely meet the criteria for having PTSD. These experiences left some youth workers vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed, burdened, and possibly triggered. Some youth workers felt like they did not have the opportunity or chance to *'speak to somebody who is more professional who would understand better'* what they were dealing with and how to better handle certain situations.

"…if we are working with, like we do work with people who are, on a weekly basis, who are suicidal, actively self-harming, eating disorders, and we don't have anywhere to put that. I personally find it hard to switch off if I've been speaking to somebody that day who's suicidal".

Another challenge youth workers personally faced was that some of the youth they worked with required high-level, ongoing support far outside of working hours, including one-to-one in-person meetings and texting. For one youth worker, this sort of *'crisis'* situation lasted about a month with one young person and was *'all-consuming'* and left them feeling very vulnerable themselves, which made it more difficult to provide that level of ongoing support. Support provided to that youth worker by other youth workers made it possible for them to provide the necessary level of support the young person needed, but it was still a *'very, very tough time'* to do that.

Job insecurity and loss were other difficulties youth workers faced nearing the end of the programme, as outlined under Theme 3, The Closure of the Programme. This impacted staff motivation, and some staff needed to leave their posts early for other youth work opportunities due to financial reasons or job security as PEACE IV was coming to an end. Additionally, as mentioned previously under the 'Targets and Expectations of Funders' sub-theme, youth workers were negatively affected by contact hours expectations and felt stressed and pressured both to meet these goals for the funder and for the sake of the young people to be marked as 'completers'.

Cultural Divides

Language barriers and cultural differences also posed a challenge. Although youth workers considered it vital to understand young people's cultural backgrounds and adapt to them, it was sometimes hard to develop an understanding of their culture as it took time to build trust with them - it was sometimes only towards the end of the project that young people from ethnic minority groups began to open up, share and ask questions. This was likely due to the cultural divide and the traumatic home lives, PTSD and having unstable living situations in many different direct provision centres and different countries.

> *"…we try and like obviously adapt as much as possible well like, like as far as like the young people from Syria like obviously like they eat Halal and stuff, and we would try and source out, you know like around the area like where can we find you know a halal lunch for them ahm… yeah like we try just as much as possible, try and understand like what their like the cultural background is and what's…".*

Theme 3: The Closure of the Programme

After the successful operation of the PEACE IV programme for four years, project staff expressed concerns and worries about the effects of the closure of the programme on young people and the project staff. The funding gap, inherent in programmes of this nature that are not core-funded, and the related effects of this were also discussed. The sub-themes that emerged are presented below.

Impact on Young People

The closure of the Programme was believed to be a loss of opportunities for young people. It was an avenue of informal learning. It provided structure to their lives and youth workers believed that the closure would *'massively'* affect them. Youth workers reported that the projects helped many young people to progress further in life, in terms of further education or gaining employment. Others discussed that young people would be disadvantaged in opportunities such as residentials, activities, travelling and the lunches they received and more generally, offering the young people a *"safe spot".*

> *"Definitely, a definite loss of opportunities for young people in that because Peace was such a huge funding that it funded a lot of different things you know that informal learning, that residentials, the activity days, even the barriers in Peace really helped break down, being able to provide young people with lunches each day or travel to and from where we were going was massive. A lot of funders do not provide that, so they don't. So, you're having to change how you work with young people as such. And those young people are the ones who most need it. They really valued the travel card, they really valued being able to take a lunch every day, which was massive cus if they weren't eating it, their sibling was eating it, you*

don't know what they were going home to so such a valued thing you did and you sort of try to bring in a little extra. But that sort of funding, then with this coming in [the closure of the programme] has a massive effect on them".

"Yeah, even just providing a space for them that they don't get anywhere else and they're feeling welcome and warm and that they're being accepted for who they are. Maybe if they don't have a place to go by or youth club or whatever, they're just [yeah] at a loss".

One staff member spoke at length about the problems inherent in programmes of this kind that are not core-funded by governments, where there are funding gaps between current and future programmes. Continuous funding, this youth worker reported, would better cater for young people's needs, especially during this Covid crisis.

"I know big things take a lot longer than maybe I can appreciate, but I just think that had that gap been bridged, we wouldn't be leaving so many young people in Northern Ireland at the time of crises [INT: hm hm], where that is kinda what has happened. Yes, there are all these projects happening, but hmm, I think what we are really getting across here is Peace funding is so beneficial to young people and the communities that I think there should've been better planning and better foresight into what's going to happen at the end of PEACE IV, and it does feel like you're just abandoning young people and the communities".

It was expressed that young people were able to stay in contact with the youth workers for support after exiting the programme, but with the closure of the programme, that support would be lost.

"Like a lot of them have issues, and the resilience, like we're seeing a major change I suppose, some people come onto [the] programme, and then they're able to ask for help. But as an alternative, like who do they go to? To ask for help? You know. So they're comfortable enough with us after a couple of weeks, and it's like actually, you know I need somebody to talk to".

Some youth workers commented that the young people who could have been potential participants of the projects would be at a disadvantage due to the programme closure rather than those who participated.

"Ahm… I don't know, it's one of them ones, it was the opportunities that they got, have been taken away from them, a wee bit, you know? … it's more the people that we didn't engage with will ah be affected"

There was evidence to suggest that the reasons for the funding gap between PEACE programmes may not have been communicated with all staff. In addition, for some young people, it was difficult

to understand the programme closure. One youth worker noted that it was particularly difficult for some young people with learning difficulties to comprehend. The project staff needed to adopt a careful approach to help them transition out of the programme.

> *"The young people that we were dealing with had some of the learning difficulties they had, and some things like that they really couldn't register that all of a sudden this is going to end. So, we kinda had to start having conversations pretty early on…there's a finite amount of time left and after that you'll be going to something else, if you've got something else, or, you know. There definitely could have been an element of exit on it instead of, you know where your traditional youth program, youth project might have a couple of weeks of evaluation or closing or things like that. It goes back to you know every group is different and every young person is different I guess".*

Others noted that there were special concerns about the closure of the PEACE4Youth Programme from educational institutions, as many referred early school leavers to these projects.

> *"Just like yesterday, with the educational welfare officer and another programme which would have referred early school leavers or people who would have preferred to leave school early. And I know this as well, XXX, who is the educational and welfare officer, is like what am I going to do? You'll find like there's always going to be people in this situation and they'll like drop out of school or have dropped out without that there".*

> *"…a lot of staff in the college would say to me too, that they, the staff obviously know like, would work quite closely, with like other projects and we can refer people on and student services and stuff, or like, they're upset that [project] is leaving too because, well [project] would very often take in young people that can't go on to other projects…"*

Rather than the overall closure, some youth workers focused on how cohorts transitioned out of the projects after their 6 to 9 months period. Early communication with young people was considered essential for their smooth transition out of the programme.

> *"I don't think we could have done anything differently. I think as XXX said we all have our own ways of closing it for the young people so we do. You know it's a 6-month programme and you start talking about closure 4 months into it even though there is still a while, they would be like why are you starting to talk about this finishing. And it's even for the staff too, they need to start and I need to start closing this off for them uns, you know. And there's loads of wee different exercises or evaluation sitting there and reflecting but it's also that, you*

know we do a thing where the program finishes on Friday what are you doing on a Monday, like what's your new routine, establishing that before the programme is even finished so you know, so it's that type of thing, so it is.

One project coordinator pointed out the importance of youth workers processing a smooth exit for themselves from the programme, at the end of their contracts.

"And even for the staff, like I've definitely found, we've had to sit with them uns in closing so we had, taking them one-to-one people and this is ending and even for a lot of staff who were going to lose their jobs we've had to talk through that process with them because it's important that they close the programme off themselves, you know. A lot of them will never hear from these young people again because they'll move to different organisations and they'll be out of the remit and all that type of stuff, so even that, to let go is tough for a lot of people as well".

Funding Gap and Effects on Staff Members

For most youth workers, the funding gap between PEACE IV and the subsequent programme *'was like a massive question mark'*. A common expression used by participants was *'what's next?'* and that it would have been ideal if this gap between the two programmes was either *'bridged'* or the space in between was reduced. It was viewed that the skills developed throughout the PEACE4Youth programme would be lost because of the gap between the programmes. It was noted that in recognition of youth workers' work, bringing forward the next programme would have been more practical. The reality of the '*nothing'* in-between was considered impractical. Although some of the projects were trying to maintain their staff till the next funding became available, this was not the case with all projects. It was suggested that the availability of a *'gap funding'* would have been appropriate for retaining the staff members until the beginning of the next programme.

At this stage into the programme, one of the main concerns related to the closure of the programme was losing the staff members. The gap created a void of uncertainty which led many staff members to move on to other jobs. Losing trained valuable staff members was a concern for the coordinators of the projects as expressed by one staff member that *'we're losing that quality'.*

"Another thing I think as well, like we've a really good, a good team of people who are well trained and know the programme, but in reality like we've lost staff now coming towards the end, like the staff that are very valuable to this service, and very close to the young people because of the uncertainty, they've moved on to different job roles and that, the possibility

that if there is, a 6-month gap or a 4-month gap that the staff that are around the table, that have been here even from the start and that know the programme and help everybody else that comes along that if we lose that, the value of, the people..".

One staff member stated that it would be *'a pity'* to lose trained staff, particularly those who were part of the programme from the initial stages and knew the overall mechanisms of the programme. Youth workers felt that due to the disruption in funding, quality staff would be lost resulting in a time-consuming rebuilding stage for the next programme.

"Yeah because we've been; obviously, some of us have obviously been here for years, some from the beginning and we have found the best ways to roll out the programme and to support young people and they know what works. And if we lose…, then it's nearly back to square one where we're finding people and finding our feet. It is like losing the quality and the staff".

Job uncertainty was a common focus of discussion amongst many youth workers. Despite knowing *'what they signed up for,'* many expressed frustrations with being redundant. Others noted that job uncertainty resulted in a lack of motivation at this stage of the programme.

"I suppose now staff motivation, coming to the end of the project because they're losing their jobs and so challenging".

Theme 4: Sustainable Elements and Lasting Impacts

Youth workers were confident that the programme will have lasting impacts on young people participating in the programme, youth workers and the overall society. The nature of these impacts varied from the provision of general support, education, careers and even in saving individuals' lives. Further, it was highlighted that the shared experiences or the exposure to diverse cultures and beliefs was viewed a vital factor in the programme. The themes surrounding these views are presented below.

Young People's Quality of Life and Life Outcomes

It was pointed out that the intense, long-term nature of this programme made it successful; the relationships built between staff and the young people made a difference in those young people's lives. Such factors encouraged and empowered young people, contributing to sustaining the programme's impact through embedding the outcomes.

"…in my opinion, I have been involved in this work for a long time and you never got that level of commitment from a funder to pay for 2 full-time staff over a long period of time in such an intense programme. I believe as I mentioned already that intensity made the project a success because of those relationship building that take place between staff and young people and that I feel is made the difference in those young people's lives that they had a role model that they had someone that they could look up to and talk to. That could encourage them, that could empower them moving forward".

Whilst some youth workers stated that it could be hard to immediately measure some impacts, as impacts are usually more noticeable long-term. Others stated that progression was evident, with clear differences in young people from the beginning to the end of the projects. Youth workers felt strongly that the programme helped young people build resilience, life skills, and connections. Some young people, whom staff did not think would even finish the project, ended up fully completing it. The programme simply gave young people a chance, support, and a *'stepping stone'* as expressed by one youth worker that 'sometimes it's just been given a chance'.

"There's young people that still come back like and say…. like a girl, from like cohort 1 or 3 or so, I see her all the time…she was like "I remember, I connect with you and no one else like cause of my language no one else would take me and stuff" and now she's doing a level 3 in politics and she's worked her way up to college as well. Ach there's some really good things and stories and stuff".

Many young people did not know what it was like to have someone for support or someone there for them. Simply having that kind of presence made a lasting impact on young people's lives.

"When you think about what they're going through, it's not spoiling them, it's just like, they don't know what like, having somebody is, and just being there".

Individuals from very challenging backgrounds accomplished a great deal after coming out of the project, such as higher education, employment, driving licences, and even moving on to become trainees and members of staff. The programme provided young people with experiences that they would not have had otherwise including travel and more mundane leisure activities that many people would take for granted, *'I remember going bowling, and I've never seen a group of people so excited to be bowling'.*

Ultimately, youth workers felt the programme had the ability to save lives.

"Like I'd a young fella who was suicidal before he started the programme, and he wasn't when he finished it, you know that sort of".

"I don't think this is an exaggeration and thinking back to some of the young people with, we are dealing with mental health crises as well. Like it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say some of those people are alive because of the project because of the support that we were able to provide for them [INT: hm hm], so yeah like it is definitely, the PEACE IV project was life-changing for people to varying degrees but yeah it has like a massive impact".

The programme also helped young people in ways that might not have been possible in schools or mainstream education. Many young people had negative experiences or associations with school, to the point that '*they would just stay at home, they wouldn't do the work'*. Similarly, some young people may not have been able to or considered going to college if they had not been involved in the project. However, the project built them up, supported them, and moved them forward in their lives so that college or at least success in school was a possibility, and participants ended up in '*a much better place… than what they came to us* [in]'.

Additionally, the projects helped many young people whose first language was not English. One group comprised all EAL learners, and their writing skills and comprehension were so poor after a few years of being resident in Northern Ireland that the youth worker wondered how their education was being handled in class and how they were getting through their classes: *'I just wonder where are they? Like are they just put at the back?'*. EAL learners often do not have the one-to-one support and resources in mainstream education that they got in the peace programmes.

Youth Workers' Professional Development

Along with the programme's lasting impacts on young people, it was also found to have positive impacts on youth workers. This was mainly discussed in terms of professional development, in particular the training provided by the YouthPact. In this way, there was sustainability from the programme going forward. The project provided terrific opportunities for youth workers to gain experience in *'everything… that the job could throw at you'* and upskill them. The programme provided youth workers ample experience to gain the skills for *'every competency skills-based interview now going forward'*. Additionally, youth workers learned a lot from one another through best practice and shared ideas.

"I think we've experienced everything, laugh, that the job could through at you, I don't think anyone in this field of work has experienced anything additional to what we have had to come into contact with. So yeah, I think we have, we have examples for every competency skills-based interview now going forward".

"But even we've learned like from other staff members, and each staff especially some of them were more, some staff the more recent staff, brings in different ideas, and some staff brings in different things you know that we haven't tried before. It's just good learning for the young people but also, you're learning from each staff member as well".

Additionally, the PEACE4Youth programme was considered *'a lot more professional than any other funded project'* in terms of administration requirements and targets, which held the staff to a much higher standard *'than any other projects I've heard about or seen or worked on'*. Many youth workers *'on the ground'* had little or no prior experience in report-writing or networking. However, the professionalism and quality demanded helped youth workers gain skills and experience in report-writing, networking, and professional mindsets. Youth workers grew and improved due to their experiences in the programme and their training. The programme provided such immense professional development that staff said they became *'much better workers'* as a result for their professional development, the benefit of the youth they were working with, and the organisation itself. The skills and the training received throughout the programme will likely have long-lasting impacts on youth workers' future careers.

Theme 5: Recommendations for Future Programming

The focus groups discussed various aspects of the programme that could be improved in the future Programme. The discussions generally focused on providing mental health training and support to youth workers, flexibility with contact hours, less paperwork and supporting young people towards employability and offering more or higher qualifications for young people. Several sub-themes were identified which are presented below.

Flexibility

Youth workers recommended flexibility in the time framework for young people on the project. A fixed timeframe was considered inappropriate and impractical for some young people; some *'kids that really do need the extra time.'*

"I think as well, even on top of that, for young people who are presenting with anxiety, or other high needs, to be kind of confined to a 32-week structure, where maybe it takes that young person 10 weeks to generate the strength to actually come into the group setting, and by that stage, the rest of the group is may be halfway through delivery. And then maybe come through transition, the rest of the group may have gone through that entire phase, whereas maybe this young person maybe does need another 10 weeks of work. Ehm whereas currently, the current structure would have it that unfortunately, you're at the end of the

programme now, so we can't really work with you anymore. So, I think that kind of structure, if it could be adapted where it was more flexible as well maybe, for those young people, then it would probably be in a better position to help them more beneficially too".

"… with learning disabilities, they will need extra time, you know to maybe achieve what they set out for doing. It is quite restrictive, 6-9 months….. but then there's some for who 6 months is enough".

It was discussed that the PEACE4Youth Programme has a very rigid approach to completing project hours without considering family or personal situations over which the young people have no control. For example, young people in single parents' households and young carers may have other responsibilities, restricting them from joining all the face-to-face sessions. As such, additionally flexibility would be warranted in terms of digital participation would better serve the needs of some young people with special circumstances. It was noted that the online model *'could expand our distance'* and reach out to young people who are otherwise hard to reach, such as those in prison.

In general, youth workers disapproved of the *'rigid'* rule of attending one project. It was suggested that young people should be allowed to attend more than one project if needed.

"…so many of our young people without any experience of youth projects, they didn't have the same access to youth clubs, so they are such a new thing. And that's why 6 months wasn't long enough. It took so long to build the relationships and for them to feel comfortable… And it would be so good if you could do [Project] and then [Project] [Ja: yeah], and I think every peace project's quite different [Ja: yeah] and the fact it was so rigid… you could only do one it was very — cus if you think of them like… so we have a young person who completed, and then I go, M what have you got and PEACE IV can't do it [M: yeah] and you're running around… and they need more, and you're like we've made this progress, and we need a wee bit more and…".

On the other hand, those leaving the programme early to progress onwards should be counted as completers rather than 'failures' of the programme or 'non-completers'. Young people progressing to further education or employment need to be celebrated, and they should receive recognition for being completers of the project.

"I remember one of the first meetings, it was done in the city centre actually, and staff were saying there's young people who are on our program are leaving after two months because

they've moved onto a job [yeah] which is brilliant, you know but it was like, no they don't count, can't count them because they've left the program before the amount of hours and it's like. Surely as a funder, you'd want that on your reports, that this girl or fella has progressed into a job or education or [Ja: yeah] somewhere positive".

It was discussed that a flexible approach regarding recruitment of young people should be thought about in the future programme. Recruiting a certain percentage of young people from a particular background should not be the project's requirement to begin. Rather, it should be open to young people beyond their backgrounds or circumstance.

"Even in terms of recruitment being flexible like you don't have to have a young person that suffers from mental health to then join a project just like you don't have to have like certain theory backgrounds, a bigger percentage of Protestants or a percentage of Catholics to then officially get the project up and going, I think a little bit of flexibility around that would be better as well because it may be an advantage if you're working with BME young people and maybe then to identify as Protestants or Catholics so just around something like that as well. [INT: Okay] Just to accept whoever joins the project and then to support them however best we can, whether it's mental health or whether it's educationally or financially or whatever".

More Academic Qualifications

Youth workers appreciated the OCN qualification, especially with the flexible approach of it not being compulsory. However, it was suggested that more or higher qualifications should be offered to equip young people for future careers and further progression. If the programme offered academic qualifications, young people would be more likely to study. Most young people come with very few qualifications, so offering them 'college connections' would benefit them. Although it was also pointed out that mental health needs to be catered for while gently easing young people back into education.

"I like the fact that there's a qualification, I know not all people might, but I like, I think then at least they have a, look a physical certificate to give them, like you've achieved this qualification. So I like the idea of the qualification element".

"… majority are coming in with very little, hmm, qualifications, so maybe the next step would be to offer them college connect, which would offer them a bit more qualifications…".

Training for Youth Workers

There was consensus among participants that more mental health training and support for youth workers is needed in future programming. Youth workers highlighted that the majority of young

people joining the programme came from vulnerable, disadvantaged backgrounds and often with complex mental health needs, and that youth workers needed to be better equipped to handle difficult situations. They argued that mental health training should be provided, not only related to 'crisis mental health' but also related to day-to-day issues. It was also mentioned that dealing with young people with various mental health issues leaves the staff members vulnerable. Therefore, more training should be available to staff members to support young people, and to look after their own mental health.

"…if you are starting a new job, the first thing that an organisation will check, if you have safeguarding training or if you have the first aid certificate but I also think a mental health first-aid certificate should be as essential in that as well and I do think if you had that first-aid mental health training which is very very good but then I think there's another level of suicide prevention training and that should also be implemented as well. Because I suppose our youth workers and in the first question I talked about the relationships you are building with young people hmm it's great to see you know in certain cases youth workers are the first people that young people will turn to in the moment of crises but then it leaves youth workers very vulnerable and I think we should be upskilled in that hmm not only to provide that support to young people but also to protect our own mental health as well because you know you do leave yourself very vulnerable when you are providing that level of support to young people".

Due to young people's 'high levels of needs', overall staff upskilling was recommended to handle the situations better as they face them.

"…you'd be coming into contact with maybe young people who have a high level of need, and they're referred to myself or XXX, whereas probably what's needed is for overall staff to be upskilled to be able to deal with certain things as we face them, rather than having to think on their feet ahm so they have some kind of preconceived. Or they have some kind of training in terms of what to expect and how to appropriately deal with it".

Some staff members had relevant courses for working with young people, but it was considered essential that staff get trained in mental health as well in future projects. Others commented that having the experience of working in the project now, it is essential that staff receive mental health training in future projects.

"I think everyone comes in with different experiences, you know and different qualifications, different tricks they've picked up along the way, but if they were offered [mental health training] through the programme, I think people would jump at them"

Further, it was expressed that staff needed to be trained to deliver general mental health sessions about 'emotional resilience skills', the experiences of life setbacks and how to deal with them.

> *"…I think you know an important part would actually be to give the young people emotional resilience skills as well because a lot of young people like they don't even recognise their emotions, because they haven't had anybody to teach them ahm, and just the kind of message that everybody is going to experience setbacks, and how you deal with those. Because young people are unfamiliar with that. So, I think it's something important that we can do as well".*

Another youth worker stated that although the YouthPact responded to staff's training needs during the project, it is vital that those training needs are provided at the induction of the project. Any new staff joining the project in the middle should be provided opportunities to catch up before starting to deliver the project. Staff's needs for mental health training and upskilling were considered even more critical after Covid.

> *"I suppose the level the young people are coming in at, the complex needs that they're coming in with now, I feel like we could do with more training; maybe it wasn't as needed before Covid, but I think now, if we do get another programme going we would need more training and upskilling".*

In future projects, a trained mental health practitioner or organisation was considered essential, especially when working with vulnerable groups.

> *"…probably having staff with the right level of training [Ja: yeah] and to be able to bring it into the project would be important because me personally, obviously I wouldn't have that level of knowledge so it would help to have someone with that level of knowledge, or signposting, or bringing in the right organisations [Ja: Yeah] who would have that as part of your program. That's definitely most important to have within it, especially with young people coming out of Covid. If you're working in foyers, if you're working with young offenders, if you're working with young people who are on the ASD spectrum [Ja: yeah], you know definitely there's a big place in the project for mental health.*

Training related to working with ethnic minority groups was also recommended. Some of '*these young people are coming from war-torn countries; culturally they are very, very different*' therefore, it is essential for youth workers to have some training to work effectively with them.

> *"…we work with, groups that hm there's an international group at the minute in Donegal, where we have, I think between 16 and 18 young people that are living in a direct provision centre. And they're from all different parts of the world, and I suppose we could probably do*

with more, hm training, because these young people are coming from war-torn countries, culturally they're very, very different ahm. So yeah, probably more".

"I'm not a teacher, I'm not trained as a teacher, I'm not, you know, English is my first and only language and being able to communicate in I suppose a more effective way with young people from different language backgrounds".

Mental Health Support for Youth Workers

Provision of mental health support and guidance for staff was considered vital, and there was evidence to suggest that it should be given more attention in the future programme. There were particular challenges for youth workers working under the conditions of the PEACE IV programme, as mentioned in previous sub-themes - the target group of young people recruited to the programme often had a very high level of need; the format and process of the programme was intense, due to the 6-9 month commitment and high number of contact hours; and there was an overlap of timings, so that recruitment for one cohort took place while another cohort was finishing. External factors during the Covid pandemic exacerbated these programme challenges, with youth worker burnout having been reported during the Phase II mid-term focus groups.

It was pointed out that, often, '*there's a lack of supervision, clinical supervision or clinical guidance from trained professionals*', and that when this is not in place, it is not safe to work with young people who have complex needs. One youth worker suggested that future projects need to take this into account.

"… probably because of the high level of needs that we're working with, I don't think it's always the safest thing that we have to work on our feet or we have to think there in the moment. I think there's a lack of supervision, clinical supervision or clinical guidance from trained professionals so, even though we've specialist mentors even with key youth workers and facilitators, everyone, I feel, could do with more support around interventions and how we apply that then".

When the topic of whether a programme like PEACE4Youth would be possible on a voluntary basis was discussed, this was quickly dismissed by youth workers. The work they did in the Programme was viewed as too intense, too challenging, and too mentally and emotionally draining for it to happen without external funding. Linking with the previous quotation, one youth worker stated that '*it wouldn't be best practice; it wouldn't be safe*' to run similar projects on a voluntary basis. Without funding, it would be nearly impossible to have clinical supervision in place to safeguard staff's wellbeing.

"To do with young people what we do, yeah. Cus even like, it is very hard to switch off, and that's what I was referring to with the lack of clinical supervision. You know that lack of a structure for staff to be able to debrief themselves before they leave".

Concerns were raised regarding support availability for youth workers at the weekend after dealing with a complex case. Opportunities must be made available at the weekend for youth workers to freely express their concerns, worries and feelings after engaging with a complex case. It was mentioned that youth workers are not recognised enough for their work with little support.

"…and maybe it's a Friday evening, and I would carry it with me over the weekend, ahm, I would follow safeguarding procedures and would have the responsibility with the gateway team and social services, we don't have the opportunity to talk about how that's made us feel either. And I think that's really important that if, with the new programme that it would be involved, because I think it is something that is really critical".

"…where I find, with youth working, with our jobs, you find that young people are attached to their youth workers and will disclose a lot more to us than they necessarily would if they were involved in a clinical service. We are literally getting everything like they will open up and disclose things to us… where there is like, no necessarily, like no real support from social services at the weekend, so there has been times, where I've held a case, all weekend and been in touch with the young person, right up to Monday morning, obviously, with the support of management, through the proper procedures of safeguarding and having a safety plan in place. But, I suppose what I'm trying to say is, I don't think it's recognised enough, how much".

Along with recommendations for training and supporting staff in mental health, it was also considered necessary that mental health sessions become part of the youth projects, given the increase in mental health issues.

"I think in this day and age having mental health is a part of it, is hugely important. And it can be easy like we're working for a different project now where it's about health and well-being. Like you can fit that into anywhere, that can be personal development you know".

Lasting Need

Youth workers agreed that the service PEACE4Youth provided will always be needed, and it had had an enormous impact on young people. A youth worker stated that young people *'wouldn't cope without it'*; *'They are always going to need this sort of* service'; and that *'There's no place for kids*

like that at school'. It was expressed that the services provided by Peace projects *'shouldn't be a project, it should be a service'.* One youth worker said that '*it's actually annoying, do you know, that you're reliant on like funding like peace money to do stuff because it should like just be there'.* Another stated that they should be services that are maintained through the government or schools. Words like *'forever', 'permanent'* and *'always'* were used when describing how long the services should last, considering the importance, the current need, and the impact of the services provided through the projects. It was expressed that there still remains much work that must be done for *'generations and generations and generations'* to come.

Summary

This final series of focus groups has resulted in the identification of themes that have been detected since the first Phase of the programme, as well as themes that are more specific to the closure of the Programme and future programming.

Theme 1, Key Factors Promoting Recruitment, Engagement and Retention, portrayed the strengths in the design of the programme that have underpinned why young people over the past four years have chosen to get involved in the Programme, and have stayed the course. This has been due to the qualifications they have been able to obtain; the provision of financial incentives; the fact that the funding has enabled young people to join a project for a substantial period of time (6-9 months), which in turn allows for close relationships to be developed between young people and staff. The provision of one-to-one mentoring has also nurtured those close relationships and young people's personal development. The focus on personal development was indeed viewed as a key success in the programme. The fact that the programme had flexibility in the way youth workers were able to help young people in often unique and challenging circumstances, and that youth workers were able to gain training and network to share best practice, was also a core programme strength. These strengths have been frequently referred to during each series of focus groups during the whole programme evaluation.

There have nonetheless been challenges (Theme 2) – again, some which have been evident since the beginning of the programme, such as the process and timing and geographical difficulties of recruitment itself; bureaucratic and process challenges to do with transitions between cohorts, participant eligibility, paperwork, young people from RoI not being entitled to financial incentives, and the burden of the QUB evaluation processes. Other challenges included the perception that funders had unrealistic expectations in relation to target numbers and programme hours, due to young people's different needs and situations. The intensity of the programme for youth workers personally, and the *'all-consuming'* nature of their work was also commented upon. There were also some

challenges that arose from working with very diverse groups of young people; in some cohorts, it took a particularly long time for trust and relationships to be built in order for real connections to be established.

Staff expressed concern about the closure of the programme (Theme 3) on young people who would have been eligible to take part, but who would no longer have the opportunity. The stability that the programme offered to vulnerable young people and the positive impact the programme had on their life opportunities and personal development cannot be understated. Young people who had earlier graduated from the programme often continued to stay in touch with youth workers who were still working in the programme, but with the loss of projects and staff moving on to other jobs, these connections will not be sustained. Organisations as well suffered from the loss of very highly experienced and highly trained staff due to redundancies at the end of the programme. The gaps in service within the charity and voluntary sector that result from reliance on non-core-funded programmes was a major concern outlined by the staff. The closure of the programme also signalled an end to an opportunity that many schools would have directed early school leavers to.

Looking forward to the sustainability of the programme and its lasting impact (Theme 4), staff had confidence that the long-term nature of the programme had embedded the observed changes in young people. They had particular confidence that the programme enhanced young people's life skills, resilience and connections with other people. The skills and qualifications young people gained frequently empowered them to go on to further work, training or study, particularly for young people who had previously had negative experiences or associations with mainstream schooling. The professional development of the youth workers who delivered the programme was also referred to as a core lasting impact of the programme – the programme had provided a great opportunity to develop their skills in a range of projects with a wide range of young people.

Staff had some recommendations for future programming, based on their experiences of PEACE4Youth (Theme 5). They were keen to see additional flexibility built in, where more (or less) required hours to be a 'completer' on the programme was possible, depending on the individual needs of a young person. Additional flexibility in terms of the community background of a cohort during recruitment stages, to account for the diversification of identity in Northern Ireland and the Border Region, was also supported. Staff viewed the qualifications that the programme offered as a key factor that helped young people's progression, and they said they would like to see more of that in future programming. Alongside this, more training and support for youth workers around mental health was discussed at length. There was recognition that many of the young people they worked with experienced either 'crisis' mental health problems or needed day-to-day support (having mental

health sessions built into all future programming was a further recommendation). The work youth workers have completed has been against a background of the surge of mental health difficulties associated with the Covid pandemic and long waiting lists for mental health services. Mental health support within future programming for youth workers themselves was also recommended to safeguard staff wellbeing. The youth workers worked long hours with young people with very complex needs and were often not able to 'switch off' in the evenings or weekends. Lastly, staff were keen to stress that the need addressed by the PEACE4Youth programme is a lasting one – there would always be young people who need the kind of support that was given by the programme, and as such, they would like to see the services maintained through the government or educational institutions on a permanent basis.

Part V: Additional Factors

CHAPTER 12: Excellence Through Adversity: The Impact of Covid-19

In early 2020, during Phase II of the PEACE4Youth Programme, the world faced a global pandemic caused by the infectious disease Covid-19. The disease and subsequent lockdown measures had a significant impact on the delivery of the projects. In this chapter, we provide a summary of the infectious disease and the government measures taken to contain and slow the rate of infection in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We will discuss more generally how these measures affected the projects and the temporary arrangements put in place by SEUPB to ensure that Lead Partners and Project Partners could continue programme delivery. We then discuss Covid's impact on the outcome areas and their indicators, as well as its impact on project activity.

Covid-19

On 31 December 2019[25], the People's Republic of China formally notified the World Health Organisation (WHO) of a cluster of pneumonia cases of unknown cause in the city of Wuhan. By 8 January 2020, a new coronavirus was identified as the cause of the pneumonia. Coronaviruses are a broader family of viruses in mammals and birds that cause respiratory tract infections within humans that can range from mild to lethal. Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the virus identified as the cause of the pneumonia cases in Wuhan, is a contagious and potentially lethal infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Symptoms are variable, but typical include fever, persistent cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and muscle and joint pains. While some individuals who are infected do not develop noticeable symptoms, for others, particularly with underlying health conditions, older people and pregnant women, symptoms can progress to more serious illnesses and ultimately death.

Within days of the virus being identified, China announced its first death and in the proceeding days China's health ministry confirmed human-to-human transmission of the virus. By the end of the month China implemented a lockdown in Wuhan province with all transport into and out of the city stopped, nations begin to evacuate their citizens from China, and the WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern. Throughout January, Covid-19 cases began to emerge outside of China, with the first case reported in Europe (France) on the 24th of the month. On 27th February

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[25] Prior to reporting the cluster of cases to the WHO, a Wuhan hospital notified the local centre for disease control and prevention and health commissions information on the cluster on 27 December 2019.

authorities confirmed the first case of Covid-19 in Northern Ireland, quickly followed by the first case in the Republic of Ireland on the 29th; both were associated with travel from northern Italy. As confirmed cases escalated around the world, the WHO declared Covid-19 a pandemic. On the 11th of March and the 19th of March, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively announced the first deaths associated with the virus.

Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland put policies in place to "flatten the curve" in mid-March. From the 13th of March in the Republic of Ireland, schools, colleges and childcare facilities were closed, large indoor and outdoor events were cancelled, and working from home was encouraged and from the 15th all pubs were closed. On the 27th of March in the Republic of Ireland and the 28th of March in Northern Ireland, an official lockdown commenced with everyone urged to stay at home, except for shopping for basic necessities, one form of exercise a day, medical needs, to provide care, or travelling to and from work only if it absolutely necessary.

At the height of the pandemic in April, 119 deaths occurred in Northern Ireland in a single week (NISRA) and 77 deaths occurred in the Republic of Ireland in a single day (www.gov.ie). However, by the end of April it appeared that a corner had been turned and on 21st April, Northern Ireland's chief scientific advisor said the curve of new cases had flattened, and evidence suggest that Northern Ireland has passed the peak of its outbreak. While the Irish government announced a further extension of Covid-19 measures on the 1st of May, restrictions began ease as the 2km limit on exercising was extended to 5km. Shortly thereafter, both governments announce roadmaps to ease lockdown restrictions.

SEUPB Guidance

A key tenet of the PEACE4Youth Programme is the contact and interaction between young people from differing community backgrounds and intimate engagement with youth worker. Because of the lockdown measures minimising in-person contact, programme delivery was threatened and projects needed to take extraordinary measures to adapt face-to-face activities and recruitment.

In April 2020, Programme Co-ordinators shared their concerns regarding the challenges they faced, particularly in relation to contact hours, activities, and outputs, and put forth a series of suggestions which was collated by YouthPact and submitted to SEUPB. On 22nd May 2020, in response to the Covid-19 crisis, the Special EU Programmes Body sent a memo to the lead partners in the PEACE IV Specific Objective 2.1 projects providing guidance on the temporary arrangements put in place around outputs and recruitment during lockdown. The guidance was developed following engagement between the project leads and YouthPact around the evolving experiences of each

project because of the Covid-19 pandemic. New arrangements for payments were put in place to support projects and temporary changes were made to the requirements outlined in the output indicator guidance from 1st March 2020 until further notice.

While the age profile, time period, and community cohort ratio remained consistent with previous requirements, the minimum contact hours were adjusted from 26 weeks at 12 hrs/week with a minimum of 80% attendance (total of 249 hrs) to 26 weeks at 6 hrs/week with a minimum of 80% attendance (total of 156 hrs). Additionally, the SEUPB indicated that they were willing to accept participants who have 125 hrs or more contact as completers, provided contact was recorded. A formal review of these temporary changes is due to take place at the end of August 2020. While no revisions would be made to the output participant target numbers for projects, the SEUPB indicated that they would be sympathetic to project's ability to deliver against targets given the current climate. A further frequently asked questions document was produced in an effort to address additional key questions specific raised by PEACE4Youth funded projects.

Project Response

As lockdown commenced, projects were forced to move face-to-face interactions onto more virtual settings. This required that projects needed to be flexible, creative, and responsive in the way they reformatted their activities and remove activities which were no longer possible (e.g., residentials). Data collected from projects by YouthPact in April at the height of the lockdown and again in mid-June once lockdown restrictions began to ease illustrates the variety of activities and formats used for programme delivery. This included:

- Youth worker to young person check-ins through phone calls, text messages, and social media messenger apps
- One-to-one meetings, both online and later face-to-face, including mentoring and check-ins with peer mentors
- Online group work sessions including directed tasks, independent learning, and engagement through challenges
- OCN Delivery within online small group meetings and via Google classrooms
- OCN Portfolio Work in 1-1 and small group sessions
- Aligning social action projects delivered by young people with responses to Covid-19

The Projects primarily have relied on the Zoom app as well as Google classrooms to hold video and audio conferencing, chat, and webinars with their young people.

Once lockdown measures began to loosen, projects moved to a more blended environment pairing face-to-face interactions with online work. This has included pairing the above online and virtual activities with face-to-face contact through workshops, small group sessions, and trips to areas that allow access and have risk assessments in place for Covid-19. All face-to-face contact was in line with Public Health Guidelines and generally included no more than 7 young people at a time. Projects felt that face-to-face time was critical, particularly to the assistance of group cohesion.

Overall, during the spread of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown, retention rates within the projects were reported as quite high (approximately 80%), although there were considerable variance with some projects losing entire groups who were school based to 100% retention for other cohorts who felt a strong need for the programme during lockdown. Given the challenging times, the high rate of retention needs to be applauded. Project coordinators reported that the high levels of retention were a factor of specialist mentors that were put in place to provide 1:1 mentoring and address barriers or disengagement and the reduction in mandatory contact hours which they felt was achievable and realistic for young people, particularly those who found it difficult to engage onsite prior to Covid-19.

There were however several concerns that were raised by the projects regarding the impact the pandemic has had on the young people. These concerns include:
- Participants mental health and well-being
- Online fatigue and burnout
- Digital poverty
- Isolation
- Limitations of on-line delivery

It needs to be noted that these were concerns that impact not only the young people, but the youth workers themselves.

Examining the Influence of Covid-19

To take into account the unprecedented times in which the projects delivered activity, the potential influence of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown were addressed in two ways. Within the quantitative analyses of the survey data findings were reported across the Phase II data collected up to 28th August 2020. These overall results were calculated to take account of the influence of the number of days a young person spent in their project from the beginning of lockdown (estimated as 15th March 2020) through to taking their Time 2 survey and their Time 3 survey. Within the subgroup findings from this same time period, distance-travelled was compared for young people who

completed their project in one of three delivery modes: fully face-to-face; a mix of both face-to-face and online delivery; and online delivery only.

Qualitative data were collected through the series 2 focus groups held with youth workers. These focus groups explored various topics around recruitment and programme delivery and were conducted in the summers of 2019 and 2020. As would be suspected, focus groups conducted in the summer of 2020, as lockdown restrictions were easing, centred around the impact of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown on recruitment and programme delivery. As such, the impact of, and the subsequent way in which staff tackled the challenges associated with the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown are addressed.

Impact on Outcome Areas and Indicators

Results revealed that the time spent in lockdown did have a negative influence on certain indicators (even though the overall change was still positive). The dampening effects of lockdown were mainly related to activities that involved meeting other people (e.g. frequency of contact with others from different backgrounds, volunteering); effects which are not unexpected given the circumstances.

For the good relations indicators, a 'dampening effect' was evident for the number of close cross-border friends, quality of contact with individuals who are asylum seekers or refugees, and frequency of contact with individuals from the Irish Traveller community. For the personal development indicators there was a negative relationship between the number of days spent in lockdown and self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings of agency in the community/feelings of empowerment, leadership skills, and willingness to engage in positive help-seeking behaviours; such that, more days spent in lockdown were associated with a decrease in self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings of agency, leadership skills, and willingness to engage in positive help-seeking behaviours. Similarly, for the citizenship indicators, support for peacebuilding and participation in volunteering/voluntary activity a 'dampening effect' was evident in that the number of days spent in lockdown decreased the magnitude of the distance travelled.

Further analysis comparing accreditations achieved by leavers who completed before Covid-19 lockdown and those who completed in the months post-lockdown reveals that fewer leavers from the post-lockdown time period reported that they had obtained accredited qualifications in the core programme areas compared to those who completed their projects prior to lockdown: 29.2% obtained a qualification in a Personal Development area, compared to 38.5% of pre-lockdown leavers; 19.4% obtained a qualification in a Good Relations area, compared to 39.0% of pre-lockdown leavers; and 14.2% obtained a qualification in a Citizenship area, compared to 34.0% of

pre-lockdown leavers. It should be remembered however that young people who completed surveys during lockdown may not have been able to clarify questions with youth workers and they may have had about their qualifications obtained as the surveys were completed by them at home, rather than in the usual project setting.

Given the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the range of destinations open for young people after completion of their PEACE4Youth project, the analysis was broken down further to compare those who completed their project by 15th March 2020 (n = 767) and those who completed from 16th March – August of 2020 (n = 346). The following chart compares the two groups:

Figure 49.

Qualifications obtained by Phase II participants during PEACE4Youth Projects (%) – Pre-Covid-19 Timeframes
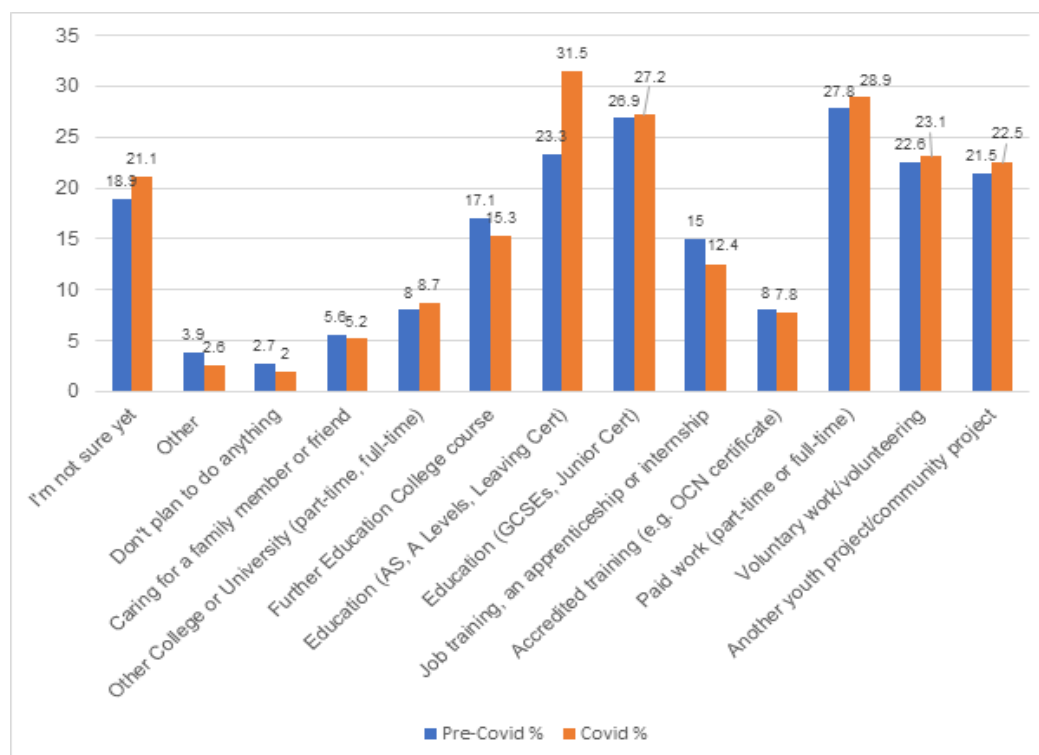
The pattern of responses was generally similar for the two groups of leavers, although some differences. The percentage of leavers who indicated that they were intending to do AS, A Levels, or the Leaving Cert after their PEACE4Youth funded project, however, was significantly higher for the group who left in the advent of Covid-19 (31.5% compared to 23.3%). Additionally, the percentages indicating that they were going to do a Further Education course or job training/an apprenticeship or internship both fell (from 17.1% to 15.3% and from 15.0% to 12.4% respectively).

Post-Covid-19, there was also a small increase in the percentage of leavers who indicated that they were not sure what they were going to do upon leaving the project (from 18.9% to 21.2%).

Impact on Project Activity

This section presents an overview of the concerns, challenges and opportunities that were discussed by programme staff during the focus groups in the summer of 2020 in relation to the Covid-19 lockdown and the move to online delivery. The section is divided into three themes for clarity of presentation. The first theme relates to changes in recruitment and ways of engaging with young people, and general comments about the new method of working online. The second theme presents some of the adverse impacts that were perceived by programme staff. The third theme explores some of the factors that promoted positive impact during this time.

Recruitment, Engagement, and Ways of Working Online

Youth workers were keen to stress that while the situation was far from ideal, they were trying to make the best of the position they were in. There was an acceptance of it as a diluted version of the original programme that they and the young people had originally signed up for:

> *"You know, they try their best to make the best of things online, if there's any real substitute, it's not the same thing, but you got to make the best of the situation."*

> *"[All the online activity] still doesn't make up for the face to face interaction and that's what this programmes about, it's just about interacting with each other, and building and forming relationships."*

> *"This has changed, it's not normal, and it's not the way to meet the three priorities - we're not going to meet them this way through Zoom. We have groups that would have come from across the border and met with other groups too, and that's totally different groups – rural coming to a city, different religion, different background, different ages, and then rural meeting city from the same background but different viewpoints, and that whole gelling together was fantastic. But you can't do that. So how are we promoting good relations, personal growth, if we are sitting on a Zoom meeting for 5 hours and asking a young person what did you do today and they tell you they slept until 4pm? You know, that's the reality of it."*

"In normality I would rather be at work, I work for the young people, doing face to face, I thrive with the young people, I don't like being in the office behind a desk, I'd rather be with the young people 5 or 6 hours a day if I could."

Nonetheless, there was a strong commitment from the youth workers that the programme they were delivering was an *'essential service'* in these strange and difficult times, even if strictly speaking it wasn't how the PEACE4Youth Programme was intended:

"We've been here for the young people and you don't know what's going on in peoples live's…you know they have been in the house all day with whatever relationship they are dealing with or whatever environment they're in. And it's very difficult. So maybe coming online for an hour once a day or every couple of days, or getting a phone call from some of the staff really makes a big difference to their lives, you know. So I think that's a really positive thing about the whole thing."

Programme staff described how they were proud of their colleagues for making the move online and adapting so quickly, putting so much effort into creating an engaging online programme. It gave young people some structure in an otherwise very unstructured time:

"When Covid hit, it was like, how's this going to work, but I was actually really inspired…it became really creative straight away so I didn't have any take a break, and I just picked up where we left off with exactly the same days and exactly the same hours. Soon it became the only normal thing in their lives. So they only knew what day it was because I took them on a Monday and a Thursday evening you know and when it didn't happen it was like they lost all sense of time. Sometimes we did just come on and have banter, trying to make up a quiz […] it takes hours. Its not like you know aw I'll make up this wee quiz here, like I spent hours and days trying to make up something that they were going to engage it that was actually of interest to them."

Youth workers used multiple methods to recreate the real room, and several staff reported sharing and communicating more regularly with colleagues than before:

"I definitely think the staff have been very adaptive…So I definitely think the staff have been really, really creative and even just sharing that with each other so we then started having bigger team meetings that happen every Friday where we would have shown going into Google classroom, going online, and using that stuff for different groups."

Indeed, youth workers reported collaborating in multiple ways, sharing ideas facilitated by YouthPact, and attending other types of training, to the extent that there are almost too many emails about it:

> "There's a Facebook page that had been created, the exact name of it is escaping me, but there's quite a lot of youth workers feeding in to that, with different ideas of engaging online. I personally find that helpful, but just as you say, just through general conversation with colleagues on trying to get a wee bit creative yourself. And just like I don't know there, you know, there's been so many emails have come through that sometimes I think I might be missing some important stuff 'cause I'm sifting through so much so there may have been offers of training around that, but I'm not entirely sure that but there has been a lot of encouragement within our company to engage in training. The training from YouthPact has been really useful…It's I think it's meetings like this [that are helpful], like I've been writing down a couple of wee notes there some of you mentioned and I'll go I might try that, that's how it works you know, it's plagiarizing other people's work but it works and sometimes its nearly just trying these things to see how it goes."

One youth worker described however the challenge experienced by many during lockdown of feelings of boredom but also not wanting to do or focus on anything. This youth described how the design of their project became more adult-led to provide structure and focus, whereas previously the design was more young person-led:

> "Are they bored of doing nothing? Like I know we're bored doing nothing, but we don't wanna do anything at the same time, so it's trying to learn about what they're doing, what social media they using, what can you do with their social media, and going back to them trying to get ideas, so at the minute it would be me giving them ideas instead of it being the opposite, whereas they should be going oh, we can write that or we can draw it, or we can dance it."

In relation to recruitment, some youth workers reported that their recruitment strategies have not changed significantly, and that numbers are continuing to join as usual:

> "I was able to recruit a group, I had been to [organisation] had like a work experience week, and some of our people went along to that to help facilitate that event, and through that kind of engagement I had with 6 or 7 young people I was able to get them recruited to an online group and that's been going well."

> *"For us, we made a few posters about us and what we do, and we sent it out to everybody we knew on our contact list, asked everybody to share it and we were getting people responding to those messages, old groups wed worked with, they were just referring family members on."*

Another youth worker highlighted the positive impact of the provision of incentives for those on Steps to Success and Education Maintenance Allowance from March 2020:

> *"We have contacts with the college connect, run by the NW college, they started a new programme "The incentive payments help quite a bit. They do. Especially for the 16+ age range. The Steps to Success ones being able to be involved in incentive payments and anybody on EMA, it's not affecting that anymore, they get it too, that's all changed from March as well."*

There were mixed reports regarding young people's levels of engagement with the online delivery. For some, engagement was satisfactory, but with a summer lull expected as in other years:

> *"Generally speaking I think the feedback from all of my colleagues is that they're still getting like a relatively good level of engagement with their young people, and bear in mind now that its summertime now as well and that's kind of factoring in to things, the last couple of weeks, that's maybe slowing things down maybe."*

There was also a challenge of asking young people to do activities at a laptop during good weather:

> *"There's also smaller issues, just day to day ones about kids wanting to engage and what's going on outside in the good weather - there was families even just having a barbeque outside and the kids didn't want to be inside on the computer."*

> *"I was lucky enough, I recruited my group for about four or five months lockdown, four months before lock down, so I was able to continue to engage with them 'cause I already have relationship with they were coming online twice a week. When it was lockdown, when the restrictions were quite strict, they were loving it because there was nothing else to do. But in the sun was coming out, it was harder to get them engaged."*

Engagement for school-based cohorts was deemed a significant challenge, with engagement being very low after lockdown eased:

"I think it's also about what did young people originally sign up for. Existing groups, our group, they signed up for a school programme. So when school closed, they saw us as part of school, they didn't do anything with us outside of school in the evenings. So it's that whole thing of how do you expect them to go online and do those other things when they didn't sign up for that in the first place."

"Whenever we first started lockdown we were with the school groups, so when school closed it was hard trying to get them engaged, but they were like right school's out, done and we weren't there to make them do the work, that kind of thing. So that was very hard."

"It's actually been worse because that's a school-based group, and they've just went, 'no, we're on summer holiday'. They might respond, but it might take them a few hours, whereas before they would have been straight on the ball. I know from working with them the phones are never out of their hands, even in school, so for them to take a few hours to get back to you means that they are just not interested, they have better things to be doing. Like sunbathing or visiting friends. Especially since restrictions eased. Once they were able to meet outside in groups of 6 that really was the trigger for the end of it. For me, that was the downward spiral of online contact, the minute they could go out and meet up."

Other youth workers working with different cohorts reported that the easing of lockdown rules did not impact young people's level of engagement, but sometimes the way they engaged:

"We are predominantly trying to work with the Sudanese group to get them finished, and they did engage. But then, as you guys were saying, when restrictions lessened we thought they won't want to know. We're working with a friendship group. So they were all meeting anyway. There would be like you were going to be on Zoom, and then you would Zoom in and they'd all be together in one sitting. So it didn't really work."

"Once things started to ease we were in a panic in case the young people just went 'you know what I'm out of here' and finish with programme, but touch wood it hasn't happened so far."

When comparing pre-lockdown to post-lockdown engagement, some youth workers reported that levels of engagement were actually better for some young people with anxiety; the challenge is how to prepare them for social interaction again:

"Some young people who were on our project weren't coming in to some of the sites as much as they should have been, but they've actually increased their engagement online, so they're actually engaging more than they would have prior to lockdown… so young people with maybe a wee bit, high levels of anxiety or other mental health conditions are really engaging online and forming those online relationships. I see that as positive but I suppose the next thing is how are we going to get them to return to interaction with people you know on a face to face basis, whereas they've become accustomed to this bubble at home."

"I delivered OCN booklets to the young people's doors, saying that we're going to go through the teaching online together, and one of the guys was saying like it actually really works for me because I was in the comfort of my home!"

Levels of engagement were also reportedly good for those who lived some distance from the original group meeting point, or who had struggled to come in before:

"I think it's easier as well, they don't have to get a bus. Say they only need a wee 15 minute check-in, they don't have to come all the way from Glengormley into town. It's easier to get the ones who maybe just couldn't be annoyed too. When I started delivering the incentive money to them, I realised how far some of them actually travelled to come here."

One youth worker described how online engagement was successful with their mixed ability groups who had buddied up to help each other:

"It has really, really went well, with the two groups at the minute we're engaging with almost 80 young people. We haven't lost anyone yet. The group itself is very weighed in terms of ability. We have young people who are A* students. Some of them are going to do five A levels. They also have young people with learning issues. So online you know that mix is really… You see it with the answers of they provide as well, and the evidence and, uh, one of the things that we have done is buddy up. So we have young people are here a buddied up from one extreme to the other, and you know, it's quite interesting to see that the dialogue between the two."

Some youth workers commented on young people's ease with using technology, making the transition to online somewhat easier, although engagement can be harder for some young people:

"I have seen one of my young people, she would not engage online, she would not do Zoom, she had real bad anxieties about being on camera. They do all use social media, they're very savvy with their social media and they're always online, but it took a while for her to gain that confidence."

"I think it's being flexible as well; you can't be prescriptive because every group is so different. For example, we have one group and they hate Zoom, will not go on Zoom and it and it's taken weeks and weeks and weeks to turn their cameras on and then there's another group and they love it and there is one wee fella who plays guitar and he can sing and the second group is different and it would be very hard to have a set structure for all."

"I definitely think one method of delivery doesn't fit all here, I think it's just you work your group and find out what works for them."

The challenge for youth workers is trying to understand what activities will engage young people when they feel they don't know the personalities of the people they have recruited online only:

"I think having that pre-relationship helped, whereas, recruiting a new group online, which I have done, I just don't know these kids. Trying to get a sense of them has become really hard."

Youth workers reported that a shift is needed later in the summer of 2020 in terms of what activities to prioritise once lockdown eases. To create impact, several youth workers discussed the need to shift from Zoom to doing more relational, traditional youth work:

"Because they aren't at school or going to the gym, they do have more time, there is boredom set in, with a lot of the kids, but it's what can they actually do to alleviate that boredom, there's very little. We might need to shift focus over the summer rather than pursue a peace programme, in terms of the traditional sense of OCN work, I think we might need to shift a bit and do more youth work stuff, just meet them and take them to a pool table and having those conversations."

"[When lockdown eases] I want to do as much relational stuff as we can. That's the stuff that's what I signed up for. I know that's when people signed up for."

"I'd love to bring them together, maybe in a residential. I think the staff would get as much out of it as a young people, you know."

In relation to administrative tasks with the new mode of delivery, there was firstly some concern about the evaluation survey as the survey links were being emailed to young people to complete at home without the support of the youth worker present to clarify their questions or assist them. As such, there was a recommendation that the survey be simplified further to ease this task:

"I also think we need to look at the reporting of it, like how are we going to get them to do a final survey, you know. For me, I have to sit and type in everything for them, and hand them an iPad for doing it, and I fill the ID in for them, they just don't get it."

There was also some anxiety about how the online hours with young people are going to be verified further down the line, with youth workers seeking clarification on this as projects are recording their activity in multiple ways:

"I know it's going to come down the line to say, right you are doing all this online work how have you verified those hours and what have you done to verify the hours, show me the work, show me what you've done. I really do think there just needs to be a bit more kind of clarity on what's expected from, you know, the recording of information or whatever, and I think that's just something that will come down the line…to be honest, like my case officer has been really helpful, you know, every time I've emailed, she's always come back to me straight away with the answer, but as it goes as a whole, you know projects and funding stream. I think it will be useful."

"Some actually sent screenshots of their conversations. Alright, that's great. You can see them, you know, what are you doing tonight, oh I'm watching the football. And then he'll ask what are you doing? And one of the girls will say I'm dealing with piano lessons because of an exam at level 7."

"I mean they could be lying let's face it and you are asking them to throw in a wee photograph or take a photograph of your scenery as you're going on your walk or things like that. Most of the time you're taking them at face value like you would in an office as well, so you prove everything. You can't prove you are online but there are wee bits of work that you can take and it's wee snapshots of all your work and that's what I've been keeping, so the data is there from the conversations we've had, the messenger group that we had specifically for the

challenges, wee pictures of peoples work. Some people send you in work, some people chat about their work on your Zoom calls, just because you can physically see one person's piece of work doesn't mean another person didn't do it because they are able to talk about it, it depends on what issues you are discussing so I just think the logistics you can't prove everything but as long as you can say what has been done that it has to be taken that it's been done as well."

Several youth workers stated that they see online work as part of their future programming:

"I would love to combine the both. I think online is very straightforward."

"If the programme is writ for online, if it's going to be an online programme then it needs to be writ for that. If it has an online structure. As an alternative to face to face, I don't think its sustainable that way, however there are parts that could be delivered online. For example, if we are going down an employability route with Peace Plus or social entrepreneurship or whatever that's going to be, a lot of that could be online, but you still need that human interaction. As a social entrepreneur – the key is in the name, social – you need to be meeting people."

"I never thought I'd say it, but I enjoy online only! Because I'm a bit of a dinosaur, you know, but I'm really enjoying it, you know, its needs must have no other option, you know so. With our group being regional as well, we couldn't have met up….I never thought I would say this is the way forward…If young people have the technology you know, because it's cheaper, yeah. At the end of the day it all comes down to money. Especially working with young people living far apart because you can bring them together."

Another youth worker saw online methods as an effective way of helping to keep young people in touch with projects after completion:

"I definitely think I'll use they online methods to keep in touch in and yeah hope that they continue to stay in touch with the centre I'm based in."

Furthermore, online-delivery could become more youth-led as young people who have been through it can advise staff on what a good programme can look like:

"We also have the expert by experience model where people who have done the programme come back and kind of be like, not a youth worker, but kind of helpful on what the programme might look like or guide and meet with some people. Help to communicate like, he's really struggling with that, or she really likes that. Surely that's what the programme will look like and will be really valuable. They've gone through the practice drive, and I know the young people and the young people are more honest, probably with each other than they are with us and so that helps because they understand what they're going through."

Barriers and Adverse Impact of Lockdown

Youth workers described how there was a delay at the beginning of lockdown in connecting some young people to the online activities due to digital poverty:

"Even trying to get them to the point of getting them on to Zoom, getting a phone, getting the internet, getting it downloaded. It took us about 3-4 months of working with the group to get them the near that point of even getting all those barriers down by you know outsourcing, buying things ourselves, doing what you need to do."

This was particularly the case for young people living in hostels:

"I think internet access has been a big thing, like it was at the very beginning. Like you have young people who are based in hostels, are going to have one or two computers and [the hostel] can shut them down very quickly depending on how young people are getting on in the hostel, which is one of the barriers we face…We then had to link in with an organization who was able to provide some routers and we were able to provide young people with some sort of access but then you had young people who were losing their phones or breaking their phones so all those barriers were in the middle of this and it's frustrating because we were at the beginning of lockdown, you couldn't physically go and get stuff for them and bring it to them as you were in lockdown too you know so that was a big, big thing at the very beginning for us."

There was also a steep learning curve for youth workers in getting ready for online delivery, especially in relation to setting up appropriate communication paths with young people:

"We didn't have android phones or anything and didn't have WhatsApp, so I was getting a phone and printer delivered to the house. There was a bit of that at the start. We tried to stay off social media because we thought it was a wee bit dated with all the old groups, so we had

just one page, but now we all have our own pages and they go through our communications person, and all the young people get invited to join. So there was a wee bit of that, I'm not going to say it was all hunky dory, that two to three weeks at the start of lockdown."

"We set up a closed Facebook group and that works well as quick instant messages to young people, they can open up and send me back private messages and it's a quick way of getting our activities out, knowing what we're planning for that day."

"We deliberately had our own Facebook pages set up before this as our primary contact had been through social media, so even our part time staff who wouldn't have had a work phone, they wouldn't be contacting young people through WhatsApp, it was only through Messenger on Facebook. So that allows you to keep your work life separate from your home life."

At the beginning of lockdown, some youth workers described how they tried to do too much engagement at first, learning later how to strike a balance of online contact hours and engagement:

"We just tried to hear from the young people to see how is it working? Is it too much? Maybe there was confusion because we were trying to do too many activities. So now we try to work together and limit it to one activity per week, instead of doing something every single day - we would still have our OCN lesson once a day - but in terms of fun activities as a group we would maybe try one or two of them a week rather than every single day cause they get mixed up with what they're supposed to do."

The experience of delivering project activities online presented other issues that potentially reduced impact. A significant issue was in relation to the youth worker-young person relationship. Several youth workers described how building relationships with young people whom they have only met online is difficult, especially at the beginning:

"[Face to face], relationships are so much easier to form because obviously you communicate using all your senses. And I think part of it is they form a relationship with you because they can see you, it's even down to how you dress."

"I'm recruiting for any group which I'm struggling with to be honest, I'm doing it online over the phone. I'm struggling because normally I just meet them face to face, sometimes with parents at the start and show them the venue. I think even young people who know you are

awkward on Zoom, so ones that don't know you…Yeah, it's like I don't know, I'm going to find it hard building relationships online like I think."

Secondly, given the fact that some young people were participating in online work whilst in the same room as family members, there was a perception that young people may not have felt the same level of privacy as before, and were therefore not able to say things they would normally say:

"There's barriers in terms of if you're trying to do work with young people one to one basis, it's understandable what household they're in because they may want to say stuff, but yet that other person could be another room that they want to talk about. Get that off their chest, or you know. So I think there's been a lot more barriers than what we've ever perceived."

"That element of privacy has gone too, like even maybe if a young person has a person in the background and they want to have a conversation that is difficult, before this they would have had that privacy."

Youth workers may feel watched too, stifling the way they usually interact with young people:

"I remember one time that there was a family member in the background and I just feel like I didn't… I thought the other young people were more worried about what they were saying, and I was worried about what they were saying, though it wasn't bad. But I would have had like a range of ages. So some of my ones are 15, but they're young 15 year olds, but the ones who are 17 are nearly adults and are experimenting with drinking and stuff like that. One of them talked about drinking at the weekend, I was thinking oh this sounds really inappropriate now because there's a parent in the background. Even though like in our group chat it would come up, it's not all they talk about, but if someone mentions something during the check in, for example, we'll talk about it."

Because of the restrictions on public transport and the health risks for some young people (and their families) of travelling on public transport, projects that were able to arrange meeting outdoors in parks were restricted to young people who lived within walking distance. There is a need to assess the health risks of all activities:

"What I've started doing with a few of my groups is meeting up with them in small groups of 4 with another youth worker. We are chatting, just having lunch in the park, I've done that since the second last week in June... The issue there is if they don't live locally they are

relying on someone to bring them because public transport isn't really an option there at the minute. But not all of them live near a park, and some of them live 13 or 14 miles away from where you are. I think that's something we need to look at a wee bit more, is the health side of the risks of bringing them together, in small groups of 4 is one thing but getting them on public transport to you is another risk as well."

Many youth workers discussed changes to the way they delivered OCN work, and the struggles they often had to engage young people in the work they needed to do to complete their accreditation. One youth worker felt that those from community-based cohorts were less engaged in OCN work than school groups:

"Some of the groups were within the community centres and then for those groups where it was more evening-based and within the community centre there was a real different character to those [compared to schools], some of them seemed to be, you know, it was really to keep them off the streets as social activities, they were less inclined, or from what I witnessed they were slightly less enthused about the OCNs."

There was also the issue of youth workers being seen in a role that they associated with a more formal environment:

"I think they see me as a bit of a teacher now which I don't want to be, but I need to know about them so the only way to learn about them is to ask questions and get them to do a wee bit of work and again being creative, but it's up to them to do the work behind the scenes and we can't force it."

One staff member tried to simplify the way answers for OCN work were recorded, both to make it more engaging for young people and to lessen the additional burden of work placed on staff, but adapting the work was burdensome in itself:

"We have been delivering our OCNs on a Google classroom platform [rather than hard copy booklets], but the group I am currently working with they found that we have a group Facebook page and the group Facebook page suits them well better than using Google classroom because technically it was difficult for a lot of them. So we have transferred everything to the Facebook page, where they can just go in and type in their answers, we have been doing online lessons through Zoom around the topics to help them fill out the answers for the booklet which has been useful but a lot of the time for them you have to be

doing it one-to-one… we go through each of the questions trying to be as creative as possible like, and it can be boring, the last thing you want to be doing is sitting in front of the computer screen all day and typing down answers…so it's just about trying to adapt to that, trying to make it as creative as possible and to make it easier for them instead of feeling that they are in school and that you're a teacher and you are asking these questions which can be very off putting for young people…just trying to have it on an easier format on the online platform."

Avoiding 'boredom' was mentioned by another youth worker in relation to the struggle of making Good Relations work more engaging online:

"Everyone has to try to do something creatively, and I'm thinking what am I going to do with the Good Relations element of this new group that I've just recruited. Hopefully lockdown gets lifted, because I don't know, I keep on sending YouTube videos and discussions and stuff (sighs) – it would bore me, so I'm sure it would bore the young people."

Missing the residential experience was highlighted as a big loss to young people, especially in terms of the large number of different young people they would have been in contact with:

"I think missing residentials have been a big impact on us. We find that we sort of do one at the beginning of the programme then we do them then with summer camps... So that's all of our groups coming together, that's around 100 young people coming together."

An end-of-cohort residential would normally have been a key part of many projects, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, would have been highly influential in embedding positive impact. Instead, youth workers had to talk through the positive change evident in young people:

"Even closing with the final residential, you know to close that experience with them, to go on a great journey and you know you've been on that journey. Now, it's looking at that transition and where you're going next, like talking about it in real positive ways, but like not going on residential. That's had a massive impact as well."

Other difficulties were highlighted in regard to how young people transitioned out of the programme. There are barriers to their traditional destinations after projects – young people faced a world of increased uncertainty upon leaving the programme:

"All our transition work was online so that was things like help with CVs, applying for jobs etc. but again because of the situation at the minute, a lot of those young people were a wee bit unsure – 'right where do we go now?' - because prior to lockdown you would have been going to meet with young people, going, right well you're on our programme now, you're going to go onto this course, you're going to go into this job, or again, because everything was locked down, there was no kind of progression for those young people so what we actually done was we extended the time frame on by I think it was another 3 weeks."

"With the restrictions, you just have to say 'right that's you done' and you were doing your exit strategy in there. But it's sad too. Because some of them you can tell don't want to move on and don't want to leave, so I usually have them like hanging on the background you know."

Celebration events also ended, and those were very important to young people to mark their achievements and to help cement the bonds they had made as a group. Youth workers however did their best to arrange alternatives in the circumstances:

"All our trips have been thrown out the window which is a shame cause we used to have like a big celebration day at the end of each cohort and a big event and we have food on and there's guest speakers come in, you know make a like a near enough a graduation ceremony that makes them feel important….a lot of them didn't have any of that going through school…now we've had to do it online, so I think we've had pizzas, so they're all given like £5 Dominos vouchers so they can go online and order their own Dominos to come on that day and they're all getting like a wee celebration pack sent out to them, so I mean we're trying to make the most of a bad situation at the minute."

As one youth worker claimed, a celebration event for these young people is needed more than ever:

"I think it would be great if we were able to hold a bit of a celebration day in person for the young people, even just to celebrate them coming through this whole kind of lockdown scenario is even an achievement I think, because they you know it's never happened before. So it's history making you know. I think a lot of young people should kind of celebrate that and even celebrate their achievements on the programme. I think it would be nice 'cause it's a pity that we have to, you know, I've seen a couple of emails coming through about pizzas being ordered, etc., but you know, it's a pity that we can't even meet with the young people in person. And maybe in three weeks' time it might be the case that we can and have bigger groups allowed to meet up."

"It's our Covid-19 babies really isn't it? Maybe that should be noted on a certificate as well. Yeah that would be great."

Lastly, perhaps the most significant challenge mentioned by nearly all staff who participated in the 2020 focus groups was burnout and exhaustion among staff as a result of the long hours and extraordinary efforts they had made to move the programme activity online:

"It has been a lot of hard work and I actually had to stop doing as much work behind the scenes because I was exhausted myself and then I started thinking I've a real block with it."

"Youth workers have never been so creative…when this first started staff were flat out, staff were working harder than what they would have in the office. They were doing all the other stuff as well as trying to manage your whole life, manage your kids and whatever else was going on round you."

Several youth workers discussed the need to reframe and protect their work/home life boundaries, as this was an effective strategy to help avoid burnout:

"We had to start using our own individual phones and getting young people's numbers on our phones and creating groups, which is not ideal but it had to be done. So now it's about keeping healthy boundaries between home life and work life…A few of my young ones would have been texting at 2 or 3 in the morning, and expecting a reply. I don't know about yous but I would have always felt obligated to answer."

"So I completely like, 5:00 o'clock, my phone's getting turned off, my laptop off, log out of everything. I'll pick it up the next morning. Obviously now if dealing with an issue or a young person's disclosing to me I will act on it there and then, but no, I've seen it too many times with friends and youth workers, when they are 24/7. Previously I lived in the area where I worked and my door used to go at 12 o clock at night, I learned from that. My advice is always set your boundaries on when you're available and when you're not, because family life is more important."

A few youth workers stated that while the past few months had been very challenging, they were grateful for the additional time spent at home with their families:

"During Covid we very quickly moved on to Zoom which was great, very fatiguing and very tiring, but working from home did have its positives - I've got a new baby at home so it just felt like an extended maternity."

To help alleviate some of the challenges discussed by youth workers, there were recommendations for additional training and support around maintaining motivation, preventing burnout, protecting mental health for practitioners:

"I'm in a lull and I can't get out of it, I need something to change, something new. I don't know where it stemmed from, because I was ok, it's just happened. And I feel like it's happening a lot with my colleagues anyway, we are having the same conversations. So maybe I feel like there could have been more support there."

Youth workers were also keen to receive guidance about what to do in the event of further periods of lockdown. One youth worker felt that if lockdown reoccurs, they should continue with their current groups but ease off on recruiting new groups until lockdown eased again - both to help mitigate the negative influence on programme impacts and to help mental health of workers:

"That's maybe something that could have been looked at, to finish groups that have started and no new groups until lockdown has eased. Maybe that should have come from SEUPB and they should have took the initiative, right this is going on in the world, it's a pandemic, exceptional circumstances, let's put it in place that no more [new recruitment], just for existing people you have that you just make yourself available. You're not on furlough as such, but you are, you're not expected to do so much extra."

Factors Promoting Impact

When asked during the focus groups about the factors that had helped to promote impact and achieve success in 2020, it was clear that the continuity, the successes and the positive impact of the programme that occurred during lockdown were in large part a result of the collaboration between and dedication and creativity of youth workers:

"I think it has been going surprisingly well, you know the amount things we can do from home and how well the young people, have engaged from working online. It's been positive and I suppose it's trying to get a variety of things. You know, we have a number of facilitators across the board and mentors, youth workers and mentors try different activities. We would

have done a bit of Joe Wicks at the beginning. The health and wellbeing facilitator would have done cooking and baking, and a sports quiz, general knowledge quizzes and things like that there, but all in all I think the staff working together across the regions…if someone's trying something that's worked well in [town], they would share that."

The following is an example of the innovation shown to engage young people in a Personal Development activity and to develop a sense of being a 'group' at the same time:

"I definitely think it's just about being creative. One of the groups got pedometers…. they have a target to hit which is the height of Everest before a certain date using their pedometers to count how many steps so again being creative in terms of how we give back and share messages and take the learning about personal development, that the person is learning, showing determination, how are we displaying that, and being creative with that so I definitely think that the staff and the young people have been very good at adapting."

For all three of the main programme outcome areas, programme staff showed creativity in the way they altered their planned activities to suit the situation. Civic engagement was focused on where there were high levels of need in the community due to Covid-19, and young people volunteered jointly with young people from other backgrounds:

"One of the groups have linked in with a care home, an older peoples home, they're developing a care package for them that they will then send out to them and then hopefully they will send them some feedback on them like letters, just for that interaction, just to get to know a different type of community as well. One of the programs is about to do a bit of an area project so they are going to find out what's been happening in different areas of Belfast so North, East, South and West, now that we can meet up a wee bit more, young people from certain areas, finding out what's been going on and if they can help out in some sort of way. A lot of our young people went and helped out in [name] soup kitchen not too long ago as well, just to give back to the community and they seen what was going on."

"A lot of my hours would been built up in citizenship, volunteering, because the organization I work for runs big massive community events…I was still able to do a wee bit of that during lockdown. For Good Relations we joined up with another group... every week to putting out food hampers…And then the people who are shielding and stuff…there was definitely more opportunities to get involved in volunteering, helping in that way."

Alongside the pandemic, world events such as the Black Lives Matter protests have been conducive to having in-depth conversations about the nature of Citizenship and understanding and respect for diversity as part of Good Relations:

> *"We've kind of been having some good conversations, we've framed it as a topic of the week, so some of the things that's been happening in relation to statues being toppled at one stage was that a good thing or a bad thing or you know with the Black Lives Matter, so there's been some really good topical things to begin to interject into the conversations that were having just to get a wee bit more depth. The quizzes as light-hearted things also have their place, but eh, I mean, me personally I was glad to get a group just to give that wee bit extra focus as well."*

Several programme staff believed that young people were being more open about sharing their opinions; perhaps partly as a result of feeling safe to speak out from their home environment, but also because of the online methodology itself – there was a view that it 'slows down' the conversation, allowing time for reflection and meaningful exchanges:

> *"I think what we have found is that you are maybe getting more of an honest opinion I think from the Good Relations side of things, and even the likes of surveys and things like that we are getting them to complete and even the initial interview forms for starting the programme, they are a bit more aware, giving us a straight answer, whereas I think if they are in a group setting they are conscious of the people beside them in the group and you know maybe they hold back a wee bit…I think we are finding young people are a bit more honest with their opinions and answers. I think we are getting a truer reflection of where they are at with things… especially when they are talking about their own barriers, whether it is Good Relations related or community background or whatever, they are likely to be more frank you know with forms when they are completing them themselves at home."*

> *"We like, we just didn't filter [Zoom conversation about George Floyd's death)…everyone had something to say…it is maybe being comfortable with being in your own home, but there is also like, you know, everyone is able to just breathe on Zoom, everything is slowed down. And being in lockdown as well has probably mellowed everyone out a bit."*

Youth workers stated that with newly-recruited online groups, they purposely conducted activities that were simply designed to build familiarity within the group over Zoom before diving into discussions about more difficult topics. While online discussions allowed some space to breathe and

respond to comments, the following youth worker found it harder overall to do these discussions online:

> *"I actually avoided [in-depth discussions] at the start because I just was trying to keep it light-hearted and fun. And you were doing stuff like scavenger hunts. Wee challenges in their houses and stuff like that. It was an overnight change. But then a couple of weeks then I did it. We tackled some things by doing debates…Do two thumbs down or thumbs up, you know what it's like on Zoom when you've loads of people and everyone's trying to talk. As time went on, I found ways of like keeping it more structured and organised…And then I also found just using Messenger another Facebook group chats from our class book like that worked well because they don't have to wait on each other speaking, they were able to write paragraphs of their opinions on the contentious topics whatever. And then we could reply to each other so but I did, it's harder. It was definitely harder online."*

Strong relationships between young people in the group and between young people and youth workers were still crucial to do deep discussions, and the relationships may even by helped by the breathing space provided online, as claimed by one youth worker:

> *"When the whole like George Floyd happened…that was a very common discussion in the Sudanese group because they're all Black. And so we actually just went for it and it was like, really like, probably one of the best in sessions I've ever done. And if not the best, like their honesty was spectacular. Like I think that I don't know if that would have happened in-person, but being on Zoom like they're all mates and stuff and they have really good relationships with us and we were able to ask one of our colleagues to come in, who is actually Black…I think it's because we had started off with some really light-hearted stuff… There's a mixed spectrum of academia…Some of them are really smart, some of them are just cruising, and some of them are like I don't care, and but the discussion we had was actually really great and it was really great that they were wanting to talk about that. I think actually being on Zoom, it made it a bit not as [explosive sound]."*

With online work, the ability to record sessions and typing up captions were praised as very helpful for engaging young people with English as an Additional Language, particularly in completing their OCNs:

> *"If a participant doesn't hit some of the learning outcomes you can do like a one to one video with them and record the session and ask each question then verbally which I suppose is*

really good for some of the young people then too because we have some foreign nationals, some Syrians as well, so their English maybe isn't as good others, so asking them to complete online, typing it up is very difficult. We found doing a wee bit of one to one with the actual facilitator then asking questions verbally across it has been really useful and OCN were happy for us to record it as long as the learning outcomes were hit and tutor just types up a wee statement saying you know learning outcome 2.1 was met after 2 minutes 30 seconds."

Lastly, youth workers mentioned SEUPB's decision to reduce the required contact hours as very helpful, although some reported that it could still be a struggle at times to engage some young people even with the reduction in hours:

"I suppose a reduction in the hours of down to 125 has been a blessing in disguise because it means that a lot of the young people are actually going to become completers which is brilliant. I think that it has taken a lot of pressure off staff too…you know to try and get the 15 hours before lockdown it was okay, but you know online doing 15 hours a week is not doable, you know it's very difficult, 2 hours a day is even a lot you know, you're asking a person to log on for an hours Zoom chat, you know an hour on Zoom with young people is a long time, especially if you're trying to come up with resources, different topics to talk about, and some of the young people aren't very chatty, you have to drag it out of them. If you're there beside them, you can at least work out their body language and if their comfortable or not, but online they just switch off their camera and their mic and there's no word from them, you're nearly talking to yourself."

"If SEUPB had turned around and said we are happy that you have tried your best, this is exceptional circumstances…like I know they dropped the contact time down to 5 hours, but trying to get 5 hours out of a teenager who is not going to school, who is not getting up until 3pm…how are we…?"

Going forward, some programme staff felt some additional clarity about what counts as a contact hour online would be helpful; for example, the time taken to write Messenger follow-up chats:

"See if I finish with a group at 3pm and later on send them something on Messenger, I can't add that in to my hours, we're not allowed to record that as time with the young people, it's only face to face."

CHAPTER 13: Maximising Impact: The Role of YouthPact Body

YouthPact was established as a 'Quality and Impact Body' to support the PEACE IV Children & Young People (14-24) Programme. This cross-border partnership (including the National Youth Council of Ireland, POBAL, Co-operation Ireland and Ulster University) was funded by SEUPB, the Department for the Economy NI and the Department for Children and Youth Affairs and aimed to support and share youth work best practice within the Programme, thereby boosting its impact.

Throughout the course of the programme YouthPact ran training events and group work sessions with staff across all 11 projects. This included specific training sessions, cluster groups/reflective practice hubs, co-ordinators meetings, partnership development sessions, partnership specific sessions, and OCN Certificate in Youth Work Practice courses. Topics and themes covered within the sessions were both reactive to the expressed needs of the groups and presented by YouthPact teams to anticipate themes for the projects in terms of delivery approach and programme content.

Across all phases of the programme, focus groups with programme staff involved the discussion of the influence of the Quality and Impact Body on the work carried out by the projects. As has been the case since the beginning of the PEACE4Youth Programme, staff were overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the YouthPact team and their work. This chapter outlines a summary of the outputs and activities organised by YouthPact as well as comments from programme staff about the impact of YouthPact's work on project activity.

YouthPact Outputs and Activities

YouthPact developed an impressive number of resources and providing training activities for project coordinators and youth workers. In addition to the resources they developed around such topics as theory of change, transformative practice, recruitment and retention, and group work, they provide continuing support to the projects on the completion of the evaluation survey, and developed their own YouthPact Ezine which is published monthly. In regard to more general activities and trainings they provide, these can be categories into three broad areas: project coordinators meetings, partnership development sessions, and training events for youth workers. These activities and their perceived impact on the projects will be discussed in greater detail below.

YouthPact developed several bespoke resources to address key concerns expressed by the project coordinators and youth workers (e.g., theory of change, recruitment and retention). These resources were crafted using both theory and practice making them academically rigorous, as well as user-

friendly. However, what the evaluation team feels was the most influential programme impact was the development of activities and training events which target challenges at differing levels of the PEACE4Youth Programme. These were the project coordinator meetings, partnership development sessions, and training events for youth workers.

Co-Ordinators Meetings

YouthPact organised and managed a series of coordinators meetings for the project coordinators involved in the PEACE4Youth Programme. These meetings were held at the express request of project coordinators as a network of support, information sharing, and as a reflective space. Themes covered within these meetings include (but were not limited to):

- Reflections on leadership styles, acts, and actions
- Management issues regarding human resources and project management
- Reflective practice on programme issues, challenges, triumphs, and good practice
- Signposting by external agencies providing input on additional services or projects
- Collective responses to management issues regarding funding, cash flow, and/or issues impacting on the partnership
- Sharing of curriculum and programme ideas, resources, and approaches
- Recruitment and retention
- Administering the QUB evaluation survey

The coordinator meetings were described as crucial for sharing the learning from the projects and for utilising the combined expertise in the room to find solutions to problems:

> *"It's just been able to bounce ideas around, are people trying stuff, what's working. What's not working so much, and I think it's very much just it's an opportunity to keep people in the loop. You know if somebody was having issues, you know, it's about listening to the other organisations - what's working, and what learning may be taken away from them. And you know, but I they keeping their finger on the pulse and just know what is what's working. Is there anybody having any issues? Let's sort them out."*

This sharing was deemed particularly important for when the shift to online delivery occurred:

> *"I went to one meeting by YouthPact, it was like ideas bouncing off each other about how we can work more effectively online…That was probably about two months in, it was more like sharing thoughts and ideas. We did it across our whole team, because we are spread*

out across lots of organisations, there was like 18 people on that Zoom. So it was good to hear everyone's thoughts and ideas. But the trainer was really good, he had a background in online training so he had been doing it for a while and was giving us ideas, like not to do 3 hours of Zoom meetings a day, which I had heard people were doing…but it was really good to get that training from YouthPact, other groups are maybe more advanced but I really needed it for myself."

In relation to online work and resources, one project coordinator suggested the creation of an online folder to share resources, but there was a recognition that it would be up to project staff to populate this. YouthPact had encouraged staff to remotely share resources earlier in the programme, with little uptake; this may therefore be something to highlight as a recurrent item on the agenda for future coordinator meetings.

Partnership Development Sessions

In addition, YouthPact organises and managed partnership development meetings. These meetings provided space for individual projects to work through their own challenges in a private, safe space. This allowed YouthPact development officers to devise session content based on the expressed needs of a single partnership. Some of these were with the management team of a specific partnership only, while others were developed for the full staff team within the partnership. Topics and themes discussed within these sessions included (but were not limited to):

- In-depth exploration of three programme areas and the 7 sub-themes
- Project specific theory of change
- Leadership and management across the partnership
- Case study approaches to capture the participant's story
- Self-care, supervision, and staff development
- Programme design and development
- Sharing of resources and activities
- Group work
- Youth work approaches
- Responses to Covid-19 development days

When asked for examples of how Partnership Development Sessions had specifically helped them, programme staff spoke of how YouthPact's support had helped partnerships develop into successful

collaborations, and had smoothed out issues related to communication, as they saw the issues through an independent set of eyes:

> *"There has been a lot of learning shared in terms of resources and approaches and styles and the Impact staff have been very useful that way as well in terms of stuff they've been giving us. They've run a few development days which have kinda helped the partnership sort of strengthen a wee bit and more in communication, cause it's a huge team, so trying to sort of get everyone on a level where we're trusting each other and things like that and there's no hidden agendas as, as sort of a longer term thing, and sort of at a place now where it's beneficial to us all."*

> *"So we had a day in [name of town] there not that long ago so that was good and everybody was glad of it because it was needed big time. Instead of somebody from [organisations] leading it it was [YouthPact], so they kind of got their eyes opened too, of what, y'know, what each partner do and stuff like that but they were the one delivering it so it was a lot easier, but I think more days like that is definitely needed."*

> *"It was sort of you know like a reset button, we talked about a lot of the issues that have gone on but it was mostly communication…but just in terms of more strategically, we came up with like a lot of sort of the issues were sort of aired and we came up with like positive solutions."*

Training Events

Some of the training sessions that were conducted to date received particular praise from the youth workers during the evaluation focus groups. This included workshops by Breda Friel regarding life mapping workshops and motivational interviewing. For example:

> *"The young people you have coming in are coming with a lot of sort of, y'know, 'Oh I've no one.' But actually once you get chatting to them they've like a huge support and they just don't really value it or don't really see it you know that way."*

During the 2020 focus groups, several programme staff praised YouthPact's training and toolkit of resources for delivering programme activity virtually:

"YouthPact sent through like a kind of toolkit. You get like a toolkit of different websites and different kinda platforms to use at the very start of it all, which was really, really useful and I know they shared that with the team. And I know they sent out a lot of information on safeguarding on different policies and procedures when working online, which was also really useful, so that's been that's been really good from YouthPact."

Programme staff also had some recommendations for further training that they felt would benefit and support them in their work. One idea was to explore youth work approaches within schools, and how to blend the two approaches:

"I think the schools-based support on this programme is huge and I think there's a lack of training around working within schools, and how to adapt the programme to working in schools…And I think that, that clash of youth work and schools-based work is quite evident. I mean some of the teachers are very - if you get a teacher who's good and who's very pro-youth work, then you're sort of, you're flying, but, if you get a school that's maybe a bit stricter, it can be a bit of a clash of heads when it comes to the likes of residentials and stuff like that which are a key element to the programme. So maybe, I don't know if it was teacher-led or something to just give us a wee bit of an insight in how best to work within schools it'd be grand, but I think we've found it on the most part really interesting and challenging at the same time."

Another idea was to do more disability services/youth work cross-fertilisation and training on effective youth work practices specifically for young people with disabilities and autism, to help *'youth workers to understand the issues in disability and in autism. And also, there needs to be a cross – an integration going on – [disability services] need that youth work piece.'*

Several youth workers discussed how they felt they had training needs related to dealing with aspects of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in groups:

"I think we'd really love some training on, or access to interpreters first of all."

"I'd love to know how other projects are dealing with it, y'know, with the language barrier."

"It would be amazing [to have] also some training on different cultures, specifically Arabic cultures, you know, Muslim culture, because it is so different and you don't want to offend anybody or anything like that and it looks like this is going to be more. So you're just going

by - and then if you were ever to be asked the question [about it], or like I don't know – you just say I don't know like…I think more training or learning on it would be good."

For others, training needs were in relation to administrative and technical skills needed as part of their role:

"We need training on specific parts of the role - admin, finance, for workers in smaller organisations doing everything: we do everything….like all that paperwork at the start was just…too much like. Crazy."

Considering the challenges of Covid-19 and the shift to more online delivery, some youth workers were keen to access more support and guidelines for how to deal with future potential waves of lockdown and how to prevent staff burnout, as they were feeling exhausted from the strains caused by lockdown:

"I think SEUPB will need something in their guidelines now somewhere, maybe in the future that if there's another worldwide pandemic that this is how we are going to deal with it and look after the workers. As I said, at the beginning I was fine with it, I had just finished a group and had all the paperwork to finish up and I could sit and do that, then there was a month while I recruited, then I started the group, and now I feel like it's…I'm in a lull and I can't get out of it, I need something to change, something new. I don't know where it stemmed from, because I was ok, it's just happened. And I feel like it's happening a lot with my colleagues anyway, we are having the same conversations. So maybe I feel like there could have been more support there."

"I think burnout is a serious issue with everyone working at home…you know if you get emails and things in at all hours of the day, you're never really off. It is hard to make that distinction between when I'm at home and when I'm working like….it really helps being able to prop yourself up [with a proper work space at home] and like set up like we had a spare desk…things like that really helped. But like as you say, switching off it was it was hard. It definitely was hard and just like inside of commuting home commuting home is a headspace break. It was close at times, I think for a lot of people."

The only improvement suggested for YouthPact's training and support was the availability of the training, to schedule them for different days so that more staff could go.

"Probably just [need] more availability for the training, just because we would be, like facilitating on different days and stuff, so it's difficult for everyone to get going or like more than one or two of yous to get going. If it was ran maybe once for two or three weeks but on a different day, each time, because so rather than having to cancel groups."

Another youth worker also mentioned that it was sometimes hard to find the time for training during lockdown:

"The emails come through about the training, you know, if something sort of sounds interesting. You know I'll sign up for it, you know, but I mean, I can't believe we're into the 9th next week of this. It's hard. Because everything is just coming in constantly. You know even at night, like we're on, we used to finish at half four."

Overall Impact

In addition to the specific impacts already outlined regarding coordinators' meetings, partnership development work, and training sessions, youth workers spoke of the positive impact of YouthPact on them professionally. Benefits came from making time to get the youth workers together to talk about their experiences and their work, as this led to them feeling validated and valued:

"Whenever we all get round the same table it kind of feels like there's good stories coming out of it and there's good work and there's good youth workers and there's people out in our own communities like us and if, it's good to see."

Youth workers also spoke of the professional benefit to them in terms of developing their practice:

"I've been to a few of [the training days]…you would express you know your concerns about your work and stuff and they kinda help you and they're always trying to get you to develop your own personal development as well as doing wee courses on the side and things like that there like so they do support you."

Summary

The breadth of work that YouthPact completed during the PEACE4Youth ProgrammePhase II is noteworthy and they have truly lived up to the role of a quality and impact body. Youth workers and project management were keen to praise YouthPact for the guidance and insights they provided. As

an evaluation team, we found their assistance in developing a supportive and collaborative relationship with the projects invaluable.

PART V: Conclusions

CHAPTER 14: Conclusions and Recommendations

Stepping back and looking at the wealth of data collected across the duration of the PEACE4Youth Programme there is undeniable evidence that funded projects have positively impacted the lives of participating young people for the better. Taken together, survey data collected from Phase I and Phase II, suggest that because of participation in the PEACE4Youth Programme, young people reported a positive distance travelled across each of the three outcome indicators – Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship – and that change was meaningful in its size and strength. Further, the majority of these effects were significant regardless of the duration of the project, and, while there may have been a 'dampening effect' over lockdown, the positive findings still held up. Finally, the majority of participants at the end of their project had achieved accreditations related to the three outcome indicates and reported that they anticipated moving on to some form of structured activity; this included, paid work, further education or training, or another youth project. That is irrefutable evidence of the positive impact the PEACE IV4Youth Programme has had.

In this chapter, we will explore how the data supports or refutes, the overall Programme-level theory of change, as well as the internal and external factors which facilitated or hindered impact. Next, we look to the future, exploring potential sustainability and future impact. Finally, we provide recommendations for future programming based upon the insights gained over the course of the PEACE4Youth Programme.

Theory of Change

The PEACE4Youth theory of change anticipated that through participation in purposefully designed projects, young people would develop capabilities in relation to three Programme outcome areas and that these capabilities, in turn, would support broader societal change. The theory of change was operationally defined through anticipated output indicators, outcome indicators related to each outcome area, and result indicators. Below we explore the extent to which anticipated targets were reached and the extent to which the overall theory of change was successful.

Output indicators[26]

Looking over the completion rates for young people successfully participating in and completing PEACE4Youth funded projects, the overall target was indeed reached. By the time the Programme

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[26] These figures are not fully verified and are subject to change.

had reached its conclusion, 7,932 young people aged 14-24 years who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completed approved programmes. A figure that was higher than the target of 7,400. However, closer inspection of the numbers at each phase of the programme reveal that many anticipated targets may have been too ambitious, particularly at Phase I. Initial Programme-level targeting aimed for an anticipated 1,875 young people and at the project level we see an even higher initial estimate of 1,980 that was revised down to 1,680. At the conclusion of Phase I, completion rates fell significantly below the Programme-level target and was more consistent with the revised project target, with 1,625 young people completing approved programmes.

In many ways this is understandable, projects needed time to determine effective strategies for recruiting young people. Further, based upon focus group data, the strongest tool projects had when recruiting young people in Phase II was based upon word of mouth from former participants and the positive reputation the projects were developing at the local level. As can be seen from the Phase II figures, given time to establish themselves, projects were able to reach their project level targets. Even when these Phase II target completion rates were significantly increased at the Project-level, from the initial figure of 5,806 to 6,278, projects successfully were able to recruit and engage with 6,307 young people. Because of this substantial push in recruitment during Phase II, across both phases of the PEACE4Youth Programme, 7,932 young people aged 14-24 who are most marginalised and disadvantaged completed approved programme. A figure that is significantly higher than the initial targeting.

Exploring the longitudinal surveys completed by young people and focus group data with key project personnel, there are specific areas which impacted successful recruitment. Based upon young people completing the participant profiles, it appears that the projects were able to recruit a representative sample of young people in several areas but have struggled in others. For example, while there is a fairly representative distribution in terms of gender, age group, ethnic background, and disability status there is an unbalanced distribution in terms of community background, setting, and jurisdiction. There is a disproportionate percentage of young people who self-report that they were from the Catholic community in comparison to those who report they were from the Protestant community. This is consistent with youth workers who vocalised that they were finding it difficult to recruit appropriate percentages of young people from Protestant / Unionist / Loyalist areas.

Further, the geographical spread of projects and young people showed a high degree of "clumping" resulting in what the youth workers described as areas which had reached saturation by end of Phase II – often occurring in more urban areas of the region. Youth workers described clear challenges recruiting from more rural areas of the region. Sometimes as a result of limited networks in the area, but more frequently due to the practical challenges of engaging in rural communities where transportation can be expensive and time-exhaustive. Findings from the focus groups indicated that recruitment within the Republic of Ireland was particularly difficult due to the limited

incentives available; a challenge that was amplified when young people from the two jurisdictions were brought together and comparisons were made. However, we would argue that based upon subgroup analyses, it was these tricky groups to engage with that showed some of the strongest improvement. Recruitment and engagement may be difficult, but clearly it is worth the effort. Moving forward, we recommend future programming carefully considers how funded projects can be supported so that they can engage with these groups in a meaningful way.

Outcome Indicators

We feel confident saying that because of involvement in the funded projects, young people who responded to the surveys developed an understanding of and respect for diversity, an awareness and sensitivity to the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of others; an understanding of own identity; respect for others from a different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities, and orientations; and a positive predisposition to others from a different community / cultural background. As well, young people who responded to the surveys showed increased self-awareness, understanding, confidence and agency; planning and problem solving; relationships, working effectively with others, and leadership; resilience and determination; and other relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being. Finally, that young people who responded to the surveys developed their knowledge and understanding of their role and developing capabilities for engagement useful services; positive participation in community structures, initiatives, and democratic processes; volunteering in communities of place and / or interest; and positive family and community relations.

Additionally, the number of indicators within each of the three major areas that showed positive distance travelled significantly increased over the course Programme - from analyses of the Phase I dataset, to the mid-term analyses conducted on the Phase II dataset, to the final set of analyses of the complete Phase II dataset. This suggests a clear growth in the skills and reach of project activities. For example, in Phase I of the Programme we found that within the Good Relations indicator there was no significant change in participants' understanding of their own identity, number of close cross-community or cross-border friendships, and perceived intergroup anxiety. For the Personal Development indicator, there was no significant movement on participants' levels of self-acceptance, feelings of agency in the community, or positive relations with others. Finally, for the Citizenship indicator, there was no significant change in prosocial behaviours towards one's own community or a reduction in sectarian or antisocial behaviours. By the Phase II mid-term report, for the Good Relations indicators, there was still no change evident on young people reporting helping behaviours towards members of the other community, number of close friends from the other

community, or experiences of intergroup anxiety. By this point, all the Personal Development indicators showed positive change and for Citizenship, the only remaining indicators showing no change were sectarian and antisocial behaviours.

By the end of Phase II, however, ALL the indicators for Good Relations and Personal Development showed positive change. The only two indicators which consistently showed no change across the breadth of the Programme were found within Citizenship and they were participating in sectarian behaviours and participation in antisocial behaviours. Given the tremendous reach of the PEACE4Youth Programme, we would like to take a minute to discuss why, we believe, these two variables proved to be so stubborn.

First, statistically non-significant effects could be a result of instrument or analysis error. The instrument we used to explore these behaviours may have been too "blunt" a measure leading to participants responding in a socially desirable way. It is challenging to obtain honest reports of negative behaviour. Young people may be concerned that their responses would be linked back to themselves and did not want to confess as it were to potentially negative behaviours. A more subtle measure may have limited this effect and been able to get an accurate reflection on the different forms of sectarian and antisocial behaviour that these young people may have been engaging in. Looking at the scores for time 1, we can see that on average young people reported that they engaged in very few, if any, sectarian behaviours with a mean of 1.86 and 1.64 out of 5 for the Phase I and Phase II datasets respectively. Low scores on this measure may reflect social desirability bias. However, it is also possible that these scores represent an accurate depiction of the negative behaviours that young people engage in. More generally, when responses are clustered around the lower limit of the scale it can result in what is known as a "floor effect". This can cause a variety of problems making statistical analyses challenging. As such, obtaining an accurate reflection of potential change or distance travelled for our participants would be difficult.

Second, it is possible that participation in the programme did not reach these specific indicators. In relation to reported sectarian behaviour, there could be an inconsistency between young people's attitudes and behaviours towards positive community relations. In theory, the young people show an increase in their support for peacebuilding and self-efficacy in forming positive, intimate relationships with young people from the other community; however, in reality, they report taking part in sectarian behaviour. On the surface this appears to be a contradiction, but when paired with discussions from youth workers about the limited background knowledge and awareness of their own community identity, it is possible that the young people cannot draw the connection between these behaviours and the impact it may have in encouraging disharmony. This is not to pathologise these behaviours;

for the young people these behaviours may simply be what they know as an expression of their identity. Young people not being able to draw the connection between these behaviours and the impact it may have in encouraging disharmony. To connect attitude change to behavioural change, it is important that the young people are aware of their contradictory behaviours, that they are fully supportive of the new attitudes, feel that they can enact the new behaviours, and that they feel supported in this process.

It is worth noting, however, that in Phase II there was a subgroup of individuals who did show a significant decrease in their reported participation in sectarian behaviour. Those individuals who were involved in school-based cohorts showed a significant drop in sectarian behaviour between the time 1 and time 2 survey. It is worth spending time with youth workers who led these projects to understand what they may have done differently to reach out to these young people and the way that this impacted their subsequent negative intergroup behaviours.

Across all subgroups positive change was evident, however the pattern in which change occurred was different across several subgroups. There is one specific pattern that emerged that we feel is worthy of note. For young people from the Protestant community, from the Republic of Ireland, and those from more rural settings we find periods of accelerated change. Often, young people from these different subgroups started at a lower baseline but over the duration of the project, they showed consistent growth across the three waves of data collection, with a rate of change that was markedly different than their counterparts. While the statistical differences between these groups and their counterparts (Catholic community, Northern Ireland, and urban settings) and should be viewed with caution, we feel that they are worthy of note specifically because these are the same groups that projects found challenging to recruit. These findings suggest, that while difficult to recruit, they were key groups to target because of their lower baseline and accelerated growth over the course of the project.

In many ways, we feel that the data speak for themselves. Funded projects did an amazing job of developing exciting and engaging resources and activities for young people that led to significant positive growth for young people. Our recommendation for future programming, however, is to caution against the sheer number of indicators, particularly vague indicators, which participants were required to show positive distance travelled. For each of the three outcome areas a definition was provided followed by a description of areas in which it was anticipated that clear development would be evident. As academics we fully support clear, definable criteria. Operational definitions provide a structure and universal understanding for all those involved. The definitions provided were often

vague and the areas of development often overlapping with one another. At a conservative estimate, there were 18 different outcome indicators that could be measured in a number of different ways. Project personnel consistently vocalised the challenges they, and the participants, had with the time-consuming nature of the evaluation survey used to measure progression on these indicators. We do not disagree. Using academically rigorous and psychometrically sound measurement tools to explore distance travelled across each of these indicators resulted in a very long survey during Phase I. Even after Phase II when the evaluation team was able to engage with a youth advisory forum to redraft survey, remove redundant items, minimise scales due to significant overlap between indicators, and minimising some indicators down to one or two items the survey was still far too long and demanding. Perhaps for future evaluations more creative measurement tools can be capitalised upon, particularly ones which can be used to engage young people in project activity. But first and foremost, the number of indicators needs to be reduced.

Result Indicators

Three result indicators were used to measure potential change at the societal level as a result of PEACE4Youth Programming; each focused on the Good Relations outcome area. These included measurements of cross-community contact in more social or informal interactions (socialise and/or play sport), as well as beliefs that relations between the two communities were better than 5-years ago and would continue to improve in the subsequent 5-years. However, not only were targets not reached, but they in fact fell **below** baseline estimates.

Baseline and obtained data exploring the extent to which 16-year-olds socialise and/or play sports with people from a different religious community, believe that relations between Protestants and Catholics are better than they were five years ago, and that relations will be better in five years' time derived from the Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey (YLT). The survey sample for the YLT is drawn from the Child Benefit Register which contains the names and addresses of all young people resident in Northern Ireland who celebrate their 16th birthday and a random selection of young people who celebrated their birthday during a randomly specified two-month type period are approached for participation. Respondents may choose one of three methods for completing the questionnaire (i.e., phone, online, or paper based) and are offered the opportunity to enter a drawing for five prizes of £100 upon completion. While response rates differ, the survey tends to be completed by anywhere between 1,000 and 2,000 young people each year.

As an evaluation team, we feel that there are two reasons to be skeptical of the YLT as an appropriate source for measuring societal change based upon PEACE4Youth Programming. First, examination

of the results of each of the three indicators from 2013-2022 reveal a, not surprising, decline between the 2019 and 2020/21 survey. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, data collection for the 2020 YLT survey was postponed to May of 2021 resulting in a joint YLT for these two years. For example, the number of respondents indicating that they "very often" socialised and/or played sports with young people from a different religious community dropped from 38% in 2019 down to 30% in 2020/21, those who felt relations between Protestants and Catholics were better than five years ago dropped from 44% in 2019 to 27% in 2020/21, and those who felt relations would be better in five years' time dropped from 34% to 26%. While both community relations measures showed a positive increase in 2022 they had not yet returned to pre-Covid measures.

A second reason we believe that the YLT is an ineffective measure of societal change based upon PEACE4Youth Programming is based upon the discrepancy between target group of young people involved in the PEACE4Youth Programming and the sample which the YLT targets – a representative group of 16-year-olds. Young people between the ages of 14-24 years who are not in employment, education, or training, who come from some of the most marginalised and disadvantaged areas, who often suffer from multiple risk factors, and who are susceptible to recruitment and/or victimisation by paramilitary groups are a very niche group of young people. There is every reason to believe that this group should think, feel, and behave differently from the wider population of young people in Northern Ireland. Which is in fact the very reason that this group was approached for this specific objective. To observe societal change based upon this group's experiences with the programme, we believe, it is important to track their progression over time as the positive impact of the participation ripples out into other areas of their life. For example, it would be relatively easy to include specific measures that ask about participation in the programme within the broader Northern Ireland Young Life and Times, as well as the Northern Ireland Life and Times which targets adult age-ranged respondents. This variable can then be analysed in relation to other responses found within these impressive datasets. We feel, however, that the real societal impact of the programme is the upskilling and training of a dedicated and committed youth worker sector. The knowledge built, the training and practical experiences gained, will be invaluable for this generation as well as the next.

Facilitating Factors

Youth Workers

There are several key factors which led to the incredible success of the PEACE4Youth Programme. Considerable thought and detail went into the design of the Programme with attention paid to both theoretical and practical considerations. While much can be said about the importance of the

structural elements such as the layout and design of the overall Programme and specific projects, we believe that the biggest impact upon success was the work of the youth workers to develop positive, supporting relationships with young people facing tremendous obstacles in terms of their own life story and because of the impact of Covid-19. Of prominence was the role of mentoring relationships and the positive dynamic created between youth workers and young people, the role of diversity within group work, and the 'magic' of residentials to cement learning and provide opportunities for more informal development.

Youth workers grappled with challenging, contentious issues with a group of marginalised young people who struggle with a number of mental, physical, and emotional needs. By focusing on the key elements of their relationship with the young person from the very beginning with more one-to-one work, personal barriers can be removed and trust can be built. The mentoring relationship that they were able to develop with the young person provided the foundation for all work completed later around each of the outcome indicators; particularly for personal development and good relations. Youth workers time and time again discussed the importance they placed on this mentoring relationship as the key to future progression. We recommend that this approach is utilised in future programming.

Key Project Activities

Once confidence had been built and a sense of trust developed, youth workers felt that project activity which capitalised on working in a group with a diverse range of young people was especially effective. Working within a group allows for positive relationships to develop between the young people and a sense of belonging can be fostered. Group work also provides opportunities for social learning through peer mentoring, exposure to differing cultures and ideologies, and having one's own attitudes and behaviours challenged. This is especially the case in groups with diverse young people. Northern Ireland and the border region of the Republic of Ireland are areas with deep division; the opportunities for and the fostering of positive intergroup contact between young people through group work cannot be underestimated[27].

An area of best practice cited by youth workers for the positive impact the programme was having on young people, was what they called the 'magic' of residentials. They felt, and we concur, that residentials provide opportunities for new experiences; for relationships to develop between youth

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[27] For a more detailed discussion on the role of group work within youth work settings, please see the recent resource developed by YouthPact, *Understanding Groupwork for Individual and Social Learning* (McConville, 2020).

workers and the young people, as well as between the young people; and for informal learning in each of the outcome areas of the programme. Offering young people time and space away from normal daily activities to take in learning is essential. We recommend that the incorporation of residentials is encouraged in future programming.

Creativity in the Face of Challenge

We feel, however, that a less cited aspect of project activity was the ability the youth workers had to adapt their work not only to the young person, but also to the situation. For example, the evaluation found a plethora of evidence in relation to practitioners' high levels of skill, flexibility, creativity and innovation in adapting to the challenges presented by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown. Staff utilised their professional networks and the support of YouthPact to make the transition to online delivery as smooth and effective as possible, and a wide range of methodologies has been employed to make online delivery engaging for young people, for all three outcome areas (Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship). Indeed, some of the methodologies and activities show promise for continuation in future delivery. For example, physical activity challenges were effective in promoting group identity and for promoting individual determination; discussing difficult or controversial issues on Zoom, Facebook Messenger or other online platforms had the benefit of 'slowing down' heated conversations, allowing time for breathing space and reflection, and the option of recording sessions and captioning software helped young people who had English as an additional language to engage in conversations. There was also a benefit of online delivery regarding the engagement of young people who lived far from youth centres, as it removed issues related to public transport, and it enabled quick 'check ins' with mentors or youth workers for those who needed them, without the effort of travel. We recommend that future programming allows opportunities for youth workers to adapt and be creative with project activity to enhance the impact of the programme.

YouthPact

It should not go without saying, that along the way, the projects and youth workers had an external organisation which acted to support and build their skill set along the way. YouthPact, the Quality and Impact Body that supports the youth work practice in the programme, was integral to supporting partnership development and subsequent project activity. YouthPact facilitated regular meetings between project coordinators (thus promoting the sharing of ideas and solutions to problems) and organised and managed partnership development meetings to work through intra-partnership challenges. Indeed, practitioners were keen to stress the positive impact of YouthPact's work on the efficacy of their partnerships and their practice, which filtered into positive impacts for young people. There was evidence of synergy between project partners, with stronger communication networks, wider use of partners' networks and resources for recruitment, retention, and engagement, as well

as the co-creation of resources and evidence of working together to design and adapt project activities to meet the needs of young people. This culture of collaboration and the sharing of ideas and resources was crucial to the swift and successful switch to online delivery due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. During this time, there was evidence of practitioners sharing and communicating more regularly with colleagues than even before. The evaluation highly recommends the continued promotion of, and investment in support mechanisms like YouthPact in all programming moving forward.

Challenges

This is not to say that the funded projects did not face considerable challenges across the breadth of the Programme. In Phase I of the Programme, there were teething issues related to project initiation that were to be expected. For example, practitioners found it challenging to coordinate with partner organisations when setting up the programme and recruiting young people. For the most part, by the Phase II report organisational issues such as these had been overcome. There were areas, however, that remained a challenge across the duration of the Programme that need to be taken into consideration when discussing future programming.

Mental Health

Across the three series of focus groups, youth workers stressed the tremendous challenge they faced working with this specific cohort of young people. The PEACE4Youth Programme was designed to focus on a niche target group – those young people between 14-24 years who are most disadvantaged / excluded / marginalised, and who have deep social, emotional, and good relations needs. Practitioners stressed that the challenges with working with this unique target population were not fully taken into account when designing the Specific Objective and that the high level of need and the complex mental health challenges they faced were often overwhelming.

There was consensus among participants that more mental health training support for youth workers are needed in future programming. Youth workers highlighted that many young people joining the programme came from vulnerable, disadvantaged backgrounds and often with complex mental health needs and that youth workers needed to be better equipped to handle difficult situations. They argued that mental health training not only related to 'crises mental health' but also related to day-to-day issues should be provided. It was also mentioned that dealing with young people with various mental health issues leaves the staff members vulnerable. Therefore, more training should be available to staff members to support young people and look after their own mental health. In future projects, a trained mental health practitioner or organisation was considered essential, especially when working with vulnerable groups.

Identity and Community Relations

Youth workers reported a growing number of marginalised young people who would benefit from the content of the PEACE4Youth projects but who indicated that they do not identify with either community background but were not necessarily from a minority ethnic community. There is a small but growing body of research that indicates young people are moving away from a bipartite system of categorisation and identification (Blaylock et al., 2018; Ganiel, 2016) and figures from the Young Life and Times Survey has shown a consistent increase in the percentage of individuals who identify as belonging to neither the Catholic nor the Protestant community, with percentages rising from 12% in 2003 to 30% in 2015 (ARK, 2003, 2015). This does not mean that they were not raised in one community or the other, or that other young people would not see them as belonging to one community or the other. This data may suggest that those individuals choosing to identify as neither Catholic nor Protestant are making a conscious decision to move away from the traditional community identities which may define the area in which they are raised and the identity with their family may still hold. There was also a sense that for some young people, disclosing their community background or designating themselves as either Catholic or Protestant was something that they were only comfortable doing later in their involvement as they built a relationship of trust with their youth worker.

This speaks to a wider discussion around the community relations content offered by the projects. Youth workers reported that young people felt that community relations and discussions of the Troubles had nothing to do with them. At the same time, they also reported feeling anxious and fearful about meeting young people from the other community and not wanting to go outside of their own area, and survey results suggest that there was not a decrease in reported sectarian behaviours. It could be that there is an issue with the way community relations is 'branded' or presented to them. Young people may not see the relevance of community relations if it is viewed as something from the past; in other words, if community relations activities are seen as a history lesson on The Troubles. Challenges around issues of identity and community relations are not new in Northern Ireland. However, we do believe that a new conversation needs to be had, potentially with young people themselves, about how we understand and think about identity in a post-conflict society.

Sustainability

Across the wide body of data collected through surveys and focus groups with young people and youth workers, as well as in-depth conversations with the Quality and Impact Body, there is clear evidence that the PEACE4Youth Programme has positively impacted the lives of young people participating in the projects. There is a substantial positive distance travelled across each of the three

outcome indicators and the projects themselves showed that they moved from strength to strength. The projects have faced considerable challenges and difficulties in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown; however, we can confidently say they have risen to the challenge.

A final question remains, what will be the legacy of the PEACE4Youth Programme? Young people completing the surveys showed considerable growth and, though once marginalised, had plans to engage with society in a meaningful way. Youth workers, however, felt that the closure of the Programme was a loss of opportunity and a 'safe spot' for young people. For young people not quite ready to take on paid employment or education and training, youth projects provide a safe haven for them to grow and develop. The space between PEACE4Youth and whatever will come next presents a considerable gap leaving many young people at a loss. While practitioners believed that elements of their project activity could be continued, specifically those around personal development, funding was considered a critical factor in the successful running of the programme as it allowed for the intensity, longevity, and resources necessary to provide support for the targeted group.

The gap between funding also presents a high degree of uncertainty for youth workers. Like young people, youth workers showed substantial growth in their skills over the course of the Programme. The on the ground training coupled with the training and resources developed by YouthPact resulted in a highly trained staff who now faced unemployment. While some may find employment in other areas of youth work, others would have to leave the sector entirely. This is a tremendous loss to the sector.

For those who are able to stay in the sector, as we have said earlier, the strongest contribution PEACE4Youth may have is the impact that these youth workers will have moving forward. For marginalised young people, the services that PEACE4Youth provided will always be in high demand. The experiences, training, and sharing of best practice received throughout the programme will likely have long-lasting impacts on youth workers' future careers and the young people they work with.

Recommendations

Based upon the wealth of data collected through participant surveys and focus groups with key project personnel, as well as our own expertise in the fields of peace psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, and research and evaluation methodology, we offer the following recommendations.

Future programme development:

- Rethink recruitment criteria allowing for self-declared identity
- Explore best practices to target hard-to-reach groups
- Consult with youth workers to explore potentially reasons for the reported decrease in participation in sectarian behaviour found in the school-based cohort

Future programme delivery:
- Incorporate mentoring and group based activities
- Allow for formal and informal opportunities for positive intergroup contact
- Include opportunities for outdoor work, residentials, and celebratory events
- Provide space for youth workers to adapt to the young person and the situation
- Consult with young people about how we understand and think about identity in a post-conflict society
- Promotion of and investment in similar quality and support mechanisms like YouthPact
- Develop mechanisms to support the mental health of young people and practitioners

Future monitoring and evaluation:
- Ensure that the logic behind the Programme and Project theory of change are clear
- Don't limit ambition… but the limit number of (vague) indicators
- Provide clear operational definitions with universal understanding
- Promotion of evaluation approaches with a high degree of rigour
- Co-develop measurement tools with young people
- Incorporate a strong feedback loop between evaluators, QIB, and practitioners

Final Thoughts

In line with the Programme-level theory of change, a significant number of young people aged 14-24 years who were most marginalised and disadvantaged were able to participate in purposefully designed projects, in which they developed capabilities in relation to the three Programme outcome areas of Good Relations, Personal Development, and Citizenship. Taken together all the evidence presented above, we believe that there is irrefutable evidence of the effectiveness in the attainment of the Specific Objective set and the anticipated results as well as the efficiency in the relationship between the funding disbursed and the results achieved. Regarding lasting impact, there is no question that the lives of the young people involved in the Programme have improved, but we feel

that the strongest contribution will be to the upskill and professional development training offered to the youth work sector. Future research will show whether these capabilities, for both young people and youth workers, will in turn support broader societal change.

We also would like to close by echoing the thoughts of the key project personnel involved in the PEACE4Youth Programming. Programming addressing the needs of this unique group of young people was desperately needed in Northern Ireland and the Border Region, and, unfortunately, will be a necessity in the future. Projects funded through PEACE4Youth reached a challenging group to recruit, engage, and elevate but they did so with overwhelming success. The objectives within PEACE4Youth and the aims of the funded projects align with the wider Northern Ireland peace process, Europe 2020 strategy, as well as the EU Horizontal principles. We can only hope that future programming of this nature is encouraged.

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Appendix A: SEUPB Principles and Practice Standards

Peace
Northern Ireland - Ireland
European Regional Development Fund

Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Board O Owre Ocht UE Projecks
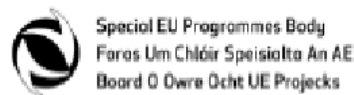
Programme principles

The following principles will underpin the work by projects as part of the Children and Young People Programme. The principles should be understood as specific to this Programme but related to the context of relevant youth work policies and supporting frameworks in Northern Ireland and Ireland. The principles will be used to devise an agreed set of practice standards for use on a cross-border basis within the Programme. An example of the type of standards framework that will operate is contained within the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work which is currently in use in Ireland[2].

- **Young-person-centred:** The young person is at the centre when it comes to planning and delivering Children and Young People Programme activities. The engagement with the young person starts where they are and is on their own terms in relation to their values, views and principles. They are actively engaged in project design, delivery and evaluation; the things that are important to them are taken into account; and their experiences are used to support their learning. Knowledge and meaning are extracted from their experiences and ideas using critical reflective practices. Creativity is encouraged and supported. Taking part in the Programme is an enjoyable experience which fits into and contributes to the young person's life. The contact with the young person is concerned with how they feel and not just what they know and can do – 'being' is as important as 'doing'.

- **Organisational and staff values and behaviours:** All interactions with young people are characterised by empathy, respect, compassion, outreach, patience and the belief that the young people can grow and change.

- **Engagement with young people:** Helping young people engage throughout their time on the Programme – from start to progression – is recognised as a task in its own right. Approaches to encouraging participation and widening horizons are tailored to individual circumstances. Participation in the Programme is not compulsory at any stage but young people will get the support that they need to take part – not just at the start but all along the way.

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[2] National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) for Youth Work – available at
http://www.dcya.gov.ie/documents/publications/NQSF_Publication_ENGLISH_270710.pdf
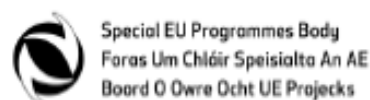
- **Educational and developmental:** The engagement with the young person is recognised as educational and developmental in its nature, characterised by a well-understood theoretical and practical foundation for building identified capabilities, and supported by a range of effective youth work methodologies. Assessment of individual need is systematic and clearly informs a process of individual action planning, and activity programming, content and methods. Personal (social and emotional), good relations and citizenship capabilities are developed in both planned and opportunistic ways, in non-formal learning environments. This is done using a wide range of activities as part of a coherent and well-thought-through programme of contact, facilitated by suitably skilled staff.

- **The importance of a central, positive relationship:** The work with each young person is based on a vital, core, critical relationship between them and the person or people supporting their learning and development. This relationship is open and honest, rooted in a youth work approach, committed to nurturing the young person, and will create the conditions to help them flourish. It will provide ongoing opportunity for the young person to discuss their strengths, hopes, needs, issues, views, and prejudices, and will help them to stick with the Programme and plan for the future.

- **Voice:** Young people are supported to find and use their voice and to begin to influence their lives, and the lives of others, in a positive way. They are actively encouraged and supported to use their voice to help shape their experience on the Programme.

- **Respect for difference and developing capabilities for contributing to good relations in communities and between people from different backgrounds:** Respect for difference is key. The Programme will tackle sectarianism and racism, and other discriminatory and damaging attitudes and behaviours towards those who are perceived to be 'different'. Young people will be supported to play their part in helping to address these issues. Young people will learn from others with different backgrounds and from other experiences they will have on the Programme.

- **Safe and stimulating environments:** The Programme will provide experiences which motivate young people and which enable young people to explore their hopes
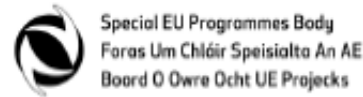
and fears in a safe environment and, ultimately, move beyond their current horizons. A young person will be enabled to design their own journey by setting personal goals and working out steps towards these goals. Approaches to supporting learning and the achievement of outcomes for young people are exceptionally well thought through and methods are well integrated. Organisational policies and staff practices to ensure safety and protection of both staff and participant wellbeing will be in evidence.

- **Partnership:** Young people are partners in their learning and development and co-design approaches with participants are prioritised. Young people are seen as an asset and not a problem, and the process is one of working with young people, not 'on' them. Other 'partners' who are important to the young person can also be involved – e.g. family members, peers and professionals. Those delivering the Programme will be mindful of, and seek to understand and work appropriately with, the wider context within which the young person lives their life.

- **Commitment to innovation, quality and continuous improvement:** Delivery organisations, staff and young people have the ongoing opportunity to work together through a creative and dynamic process of co-design to ensure that Programme provision is always relevant to Programme objectives and young people's needs, and that delivery is consistently responsive to the requirements of participants. A culture of critical reflection and innovation is fostered and actively supported.

Appendix B: Participant Profile Phase 2

PEACE4 Phase II Youth Group Cohorts

This is completed by the worker at the beginning of the group programme.

* Required

Email address *

Your email

To begin, please enter your group/cohort code *

For your code use your project name, followed by initials of your organisation, followed by name/number of cohort. For example, BREAKTHROUGH-SB-G1 would be the code for group 1 of Streetbeat.

Your answer

What is the start date for this group/cohort? *

Date

dd/mm/yyyy

What is the expected end date for this group/cohort? *

Date

dd/mm/yyyy

Please describe the special features of your project or intervention (i.e. project design, hours of engagement, description of activities, activity goals) *

Your answer

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address you provided.

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

reCAPTCHA
Privacy Terms
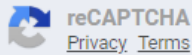
Appendix C: Time 1 Survey (English) Phase 1

The survey you are about to complete is the FIRST of a series of four surveys to explore young people's attitudes and experiences with the people around them. Our goal is to follow these same young people throughout their participation in PEACE IV funded projects. By doing this we can understand how attitudes and experiences change over time. Because this type of study where we follow young people at multiple time points is very rare, your participation is very important!

Your answers will be kept underline confidential; only the evaluation team at Queen's University will see them. We do ask a few personal questions, so if you find any of these questions upsetting please speak with your youth worker.

The survey should only take about 20-25 minutes to complete. This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think so please answer as honestly as possible.

How will the information be stored?

If you agree to participate, your name will not be used in any reports that are written and published about the research. In accordance with Queen's University policy, all data will be held on a secure server for a period of no less than 5 years and then destroyed.

What will happen with the information?

The findings of this evaluation will be reported in several ways. Reports and verbal presentations will be given to the Special European Union Programmes Body throughout the course of the evaluation. Also, your project leader will receive anonymised data from every completed survey for their organisation every 3 months; NO ONE will be able to identify your answers from this. The data gathered during the project may also be analysed for presentation and publication in academic conferences and journals.

Are there any risks?

We will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of those who take part in the research – this means we will not tell anyone you have participated and we will remove your name from all reports and raw data. To further disguise each person's identity, we will combine your responses with other people's

responses so that bigger ideas and issues are reported to the Special European Union Programmes Body.

What are the benefits of taking part?

It is important that the Special European Union Programmes Body understands the impact of the PEACE IV Specific Objective 2.1 and whether or not the investment has had the intended impact that was anticipated. By taking part in this evaluation you will be doing just that. It is also hoped that you would find the surveys to be an enjoyable opportunity to express your opinions and share your experiences.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate and you may also ask for your information to be removed up until the time that the data is analysed; after which time we will not be able to remove the data. The decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences to you or impact your relationship with the researchers, the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations, Queen's University, or the Special European Union Programmes Body.

Contact details

If you have any further questions about the study or about what your involvement might require, please do not hesitate to contact Danielle Blaylock or Stephanie Burns via phone, email, or the postal address below:

Dr Danielle Blaylock [d.blaylock@qub.ac.uk, 028 9097 4333]

Dr Stephanie Burns [stephanie.burns@qub.ac.uk, 028 90975655]

Queen's University Belfast, School of Psychology, 18-30 Malone Road, Belfast BT7 1NN

If you want to continue taking part in our survey, please tick Yes below.

 ○ **Yes**

 ○ **No**

Before we get started it is very important that we have a way to match up your surveys. Instead of asking for your name, one way we are doing this is by asking you for your unique learner number. Please know that we will not use this information for any other purpose other than to match your surveys. We will never know your name.

If you are unsure of your number, please ask a staff member

Unique Learner Number/ ID Number: _____

First, we would like to ask you about the school you attend(ed) and your past experiences with community projects.

Across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland there are a small number of integrated or mixed faith schools. This is when young people from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, go to school together. An example in Northern Ireland is Lagan Integrated College and in the Republic of Ireland is Ballymakenny College.

Did you attend an integrated or mixed-faith school for primary and/or post-primary school? Please tick all that apply

□ Yes, primary school   □ No

□ Yes, post-primary school   □ Not sure

Shared education is when different schools work together to provide students with a wider variety of resources by working together. One example is when students from one school take classes at a school other than their own.

Was your school involved in shared education?

□ Yes   □ Not sure   □ No

Are you currently participating in other youth projects?

□ Yes   □ No

    If yes...Which organisation? _____

Have you participated in any other youth projects in the past 12 months?

□ Yes   □ No

    If yes...Which organisation? _____

SECTION 1

This section is about your feelings and experiences.

Please select the degree to which you disagree or agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The demands of everyday life often get me down.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like most aspects of my personality.	○	○	○	○	○	○
In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	○	○	○	○	○	○
People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please select the degree to which the following statements describe you.

	Does not describe me at all	Does not describe me	Describes me	Describes me a lot
If someone opposes me, I can find means and ways to get what I want.	○	○	○	○
It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.	○	○	○	○
I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.	○	○	○	○
Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.	○	○	○	○
I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.	○	○	○	○
No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it.	○	○	○	○

Please select the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	○	○	○	○
At times I think I am no good at all.	○	○	○	○
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	○	○	○	○
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	○	○	○	○
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	○	○	○	○
I certainly feel useless at times.	○	○	○	○
I feel that I'm a person of worth.	○	○	○	○
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	○	○	○	○
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.	○	○	○	○
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	○	○	○	○

If you were having a personal-emotional problem, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people?

	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Slightly likely	Likely	Extremely likely
Friend	○	○	○	○	○	○
Parent	○	○	○	○	○	○
Relative	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mental health professional	○	○	○	○	○	○
Phone help line	○	○	○	○	○	○
Doctor/GP	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teacher	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pastor/Priest	○	○	○	○	○	○
Youth worker	○	○	○	○	○	○
I wouldn't seek help from anyone	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other_____	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please indicate (by circling the number on a scale of 0-100) how disadvantaged you feel in everyday life because of....

	Not disadvantaged at all	Very disadvantaged
...your income	0-------10--------20--------30-------40--------50-------60-------70------80-------90--------100	
....the area where you live	0-------10-------20-------30------40--------50------60-------70------80------90-------100	

Please select the degree to which the following statements describe you.

	Does not describe me at all	Does not describe me	In the middle	Describes me	Describes me a lot
I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others.	○	○	○	○	○
I know where to go in the community to get help.	○	○	○	○	○
Getting an education is important to me.	○	○	○	○	○
I try to finish what I start.	○	○	○	○	○
I have people I look up to.	○	○	○	○	○
My parents/caregivers know a lot about me.	○	○	○	○	○
My family/the people I am closest to stand by me during difficult times.	○	○	○	○	○
I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life.	○	○	○	○	○
I am treated fairly in my community.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I belong(ed) at my school.	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy my cultural and family traditions.	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION 2

This section is about your interactions and relationships with others.

Please select the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	In the middle	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I really like being a leader of a group.	○	○	○	○	○
Project work gives me a chance to take a leading role in the group.	○	○	○	○	○
When working in a group I do my best to persuade the others to use my ideas.	○	○	○	○	○
I am often chosen to be the team leader or captain of a team.	○	○	○	○	○
I like organizing other people.	○	○	○	○	○
My friends follow my suggestions when they can't make up their minds.	○	○	○	○	○

How much are the following statements like you?

	Not at all	A little bit	In the middle	Quite a lot	A lot
I can make up my own mind about how others should be treated and stick to it.	○	○	○	○	○
If I meet someone new, I like to ask them about where they come from and what they like to do.	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy learning about how other people live.	○	○	○	○	○
I like to hear how other families do things in the same way or in different ways to my family.	○	○	○	○	○
Even if I don't agree with someone, I still think their opinion is important.	○	○	○	○	○
If two groups are fighting, I think they should talk to each other to sort it out.	○	○	○	○	○
If I want to imagine how people in another country feel about an issue, I try to remember times when I felt that way too.	○	○	○	○	○
I think that everyone has the same feelings inside, even if they look a little bit different on the outside.	○	○	○	○	○

How much are the following statements like you?

	Not at all	A little bit	In the middle	Quite a lot	A lot
I think about what people might feel before I say or do anything to them.	○	○	○	○	○
If I knew I was being unfair to someone, it would make me feel bad about myself.	○	○	○	○	○
If there were new people in our neighbourhood who were different from everyone else, I would go out of my way to be friendly to them.	○	○	○	○	○
When someone treats me kindly, I treat them kindly in return, no matter how different they are from me.	○	○	○	○	○
It makes me happy when I see groups of different people getting along together.	○	○	○	○	○

How much are the following statements like you?

	Not at all	A little bit	In the middle	Quite a lot	A lot
If someone is from a group that is different to most people in our country, I think they should be treated the same as everyone else.	○	○	○	○	○
If I can't understand the way someone speaks, I try my best to understand what they are saying.	○	○	○	○	○
I think my opinion is just as important as everyone else's opinion.	○	○	○	○	○
I think it's better in a community if people are the same as everyone else.	○	○	○	○	○
It bothers me when I see someone being picked on because they are different.	○	○	○	○	○

Have you ever lived in a residential home, hostel, or lived with a foster parent?

O Yes (Please skip to SECTION 3)   O No   O Not sure

The next questions are about the people you consider your family. There are many different types of families – they may be your relatives, people you're currently living with, or those you're closest to. Thinking about these people, how much would you disagree or agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
We really help and support one another	○	○	○	○	○	○
There is a feeling of togetherness between us	○	○	○	○	○	○
The people I live with don't do things together	○	○	○	○	○	○
We really get along with each other	○	○	○	○	○	○
The people I live with seem to avoid contact with each other when at home	○	○	○	○	○	○

SECTION 3

In Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, many people come from two main community backgrounds – Catholic and Protestant. You may be neither of these or unsure. Thinking about the community you feel most part of, please answer the following questions.

	Strongly disagree		In the middle		Strongly agree
I feel good about being from my community.	○	○	○	○	○
Being from my community is an important part of who I am.	○	○	○	○	○

Thinking again about the people you consider your family - this may be people you are related to, people you're currently living with or those you're closest to (remember, you do not have to answer any questions you would prefer not to answer)...

	Not at all	A little	Sometimes	Often	Very much
The people I am closest to teach me about the history, values & beliefs of our community.	O	O	O	O	O
The home I live in is decorated with things that reflect my community.	O	O	O	O	O
The people closest to me attend things such as activities, concerts, plays, festivals, or celebrate other events that represent my community.	O	O	O	O	O
The people I am closest to mostly hang out with other people from the same community background.	O	O	O	O	O
The people I consider to be my family feel a strong attachment to our community.	O	O	O	O	O

The following questions ask about your personal, family, and community experiences of conflict as a result of the Troubles.

What has been the impact of the conflict on the following...?

	None	Low impact	Some impact	Moderate impact	A whole lot
The area where you live	O	O	O	O	O
Your family/people you live with	O	O	O	O	O
On you	O	O	O	O	O

For the following questions, if you consider yourself to be part of the Catholic community, the "other" community would be the Protestant community. If you consider yourself to be part of the Protestant community, the "other" would be the Catholic community. If you are neither or are unsure, the "other" would be a community other than your own.

	Nearly all from your community	More from your community than the other	A mixture	More from the other community than yours	All or nearly all from the other community
We want you to think about the neighbourhood where you live. Are the people there...?	O	O	O	O	O
On an average day, is it likely that the people you see would be...?	O	O	O	O	O

For the next few series of questions we are interested in the interactions you may have with young people from the other community.

For the questions below, please think about the time you spend <u>DURING PROJECT ACTIVITIES.</u>

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
How often do you spend time with young people from the other community?	○	○	○	○	○
In general, how often are your experiences with young people from the other community during project activities NEGATIVE?	○	○	○	○	○
In general, how often are your experiences with young people from the other community during project activities POSITIVE?	○	○	○	○	○

If you can, please think of a situation where you might meet other young people. Would you...

	Not at all	A little	In the middle	Quite a lot	Extremely
Feel nervous towards those from the other community?	○	○	○	○	○
Feel uncomfortable around young people from the other community?	○	○	○	○	○
Feel nervous towards those from across the border?	○	○	○	○	○
Feel uncomfortable around young people from across the border?	○	○	○	○	○

Now, please think about the time you spend <u>OUTSIDE of project activities.</u>

	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Very often
How often do you spend time with young people from the other community?	○	○	○	○	○
Socialize and/or play sport with young people from a different religious community?	○	○	○	○	○
Send emails, text, or connect on social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) with young people from the other community?	○	○	○	○	○
In general, how often are your experiences with young people from the other community outside of project activities NEGATIVE?	○	○	○	○	○
In general, how often are your experiences with young people from the other community outside of project activities POSITIVE?	○	○	○	○	○

Now, please think about the people who matter to you in your life, like your family and friends. Keeping those people in mind, please answer the following questions.

On the whole, members of my community, family, and friends want me...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
To enjoy social activities together with members of the other community.	○	○	○	○
To have a romantic relationship with someone from the other community.	○	○	○	○
To have friends that are from the other community.	○	○	○	○

Now we'd like to ask you about your close friends – friends that you spend a lot of time with, enjoy their company, and have a strong connection with.

About how many of your close friends are from the other community?

None				Almost All Friends
1	2	3	4	5

And in numbers, how many close friends from the other community do you have?

None	One	Two to Four	Five to Nine	Ten or More Friends
1	2	3	4	5

How close do you feel you are to them?

Not close at all				Extremely close
1	2	3	4	5

How often do you get to hang out or spend time with them?

Not very frequently				Very frequently
1	2	3	4	5

How many of your CLOSE friends from your community have friends from the other community?

Most	More than half	About half	A few	None
1	2	3	4	5

In numbers, how many close friends from across the border do you have?

None	One	Two to Four	Five to Nine	Ten or More Friends
1	2	3	4	5

How close do you feel you are to them?

Not close at all				Extremely close
1	2	3	4	5

How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	In the middle	Agree	Strongly agree
For me, making new friends from another community is easy.	O	O	O	O	O
I am confident I would be able to get close to a new friend from another community.	O	O	O	O	O
I believe I would have fun with a new friend from another community.	O	O	O	O	O
I don't think I would be able to make new friends with people from communities other than my own.	O	O	O	O	O
Being included in a friendship group with young people from lots of other backgrounds is easy.	O	O	O	O	O
I believe I could easily trust a new friend from another community.	O	O	O	O	O
I believe I could find many things in common with new friends from another community.	O	O	O	O	O

In Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, people may identify with different nationalities. Please tick/circle the boxes that you identify with.

Do you identify as British?　　O Yes　　　　O No　　　　　O Not sure

　　　If you said yes, how strongly do you identify as British?

　　　　1 ------------ 2 --------------- 3 ----------------- 4 -------------- 5

　　　Not strongly at all　　　　　　　　　　　　Very strongly

Do you identify as Irish?　　O Yes　　　　O No　　　　　O Not sure

　　　If you said yes, how strongly do you identify as Irish?

　　　　1 ------------ 2 --------------- 3 ----------------- 4 -------------- 5

　　　Not strongly at all　　　　　　　　　　　　Very strongly

Do you identify as Northern Irish?　　O Yes　　　O No　　　　　O Not sure

　　　If you said yes, how strongly do you identify as Northern Irish?

　　　　1 ------------ 2 --------------- 3 ----------------- 4 -------------- 5

　　　Not strongly at all　　　　　　　　　　　　Very strongly

Appendix D: Time 1 Survey (English) Phase 2

The survey you are about to complete is the FIRST of a series of four surveys to explore how young people's attitudes and experiences change during their time in their PEACE IV project.

Your answers will be kept underlined confidential; only the evaluation team at Queen's University will see them. We do ask a few personal questions, so if you find any of these questions upsetting please speak with your youth worker. Your participation is voluntary and you can leave out any questions you do not want to answer.

The survey should only take about 20-25 minutes to complete. This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think so please answer as honestly as possible.

How will the information be stored?
If you agree to participate, your name will not be used in any reports that are written and published about the research. In accordance with Queen's University policy, all electronic data will be held on a secure server for a period of no less than 5 years and then destroyed. Any hard copies of the survey will be entered as soon as possible into the online database by your youth worker and will then be shredded.

What will happen with the information?
The findings of this evaluation will be reported in several ways. Reports and verbal presentations will be given to the Special European Union Programmes Body throughout the course of the evaluation. Also, the leader of your project will receive anonymised data from every completed survey for their project every 3 months; NO ONE will be able to identify your answers from this. The data gathered during the project may also be analysed for presentation and publication in academic conferences and journals.

Are there any risks?
We will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of those who take part in the research – this means we will not tell anyone you have participated and we will remove your name from all reports and raw data. To further disguise each person's identity, we will combine your responses with other people's responses so that general trends and issues are reported to the Special European Union Programmes Body.

What are the benefits of taking part?
It is important that the Special European Union Programmes Body understands the impact of the PEACE IV Specific Objective 2.1 and whether or not the funding has made a difference. By taking part in this evaluation you will be doing just that. It is also hoped that you would find the surveys to be an enjoyable opportunity to express your opinions and share your experiences.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate and you may also ask for your information to be removed up until the time that the data is analysed; after which time we will not be able to remove the data. The decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences to you or impact your relationship with the researchers, the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations, Queen's University, or the Special European Union Programmes Body.

Contact details
If you have any further questions about the study or about what your involvement might require, please do not hesitate to contact Danielle Blaylock or Stephanie Burns via phone, email, or the postal address below:
Dr Danielle Blaylock [d.blaylock@qub.ac.uk, 028 9097 4333]
Dr Stephanie Burns [stephanie.burns@qub.ac.uk, 028 90975655]
Queen's University Belfast, School of Psychology, 18-30 Malone Road, Belfast BT7 1NN

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Before we get started it is very important that we have a way to match up your surveys. Instead of asking for your name, one way we are doing this is by asking you for a unique ID number. Please know that we will not use this information for any other purpose other than to match your surveys.

We will never know your name.

* You may need to ask a staff member for help to get your ID number *

Please use the following format for ID number:

ProjectNameOrganisationNameCohortNumberYearFirst three letters of participant's surnameDay of birth

e.g. *YOUTHSCAPESWCCohort12019BUR12*

e.g. *AMPLIFYForoigeCohort22020MCL10*

ID Number_____

If you want to continue taking part in our survey, please tick Yes below.

O Yes

O No

2

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Do you live in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland?
O Republic of Ireland

O Northern Ireland

What is the first half of your postcode OR name of the area where you live?

What is your gender?
O Male   O Female   O Other_____

How old are you?

Do you have any kind of disability?
O Yes   O No   O Unsure

Do you provide regular service or help for any sick, disabled, or elderly relative, friend, or neighbour?
O Yes   O No   O Unsure

Which religious group do you feel you belong to?
O Protestant   O Jewish

O Catholic   O Muslim

O Hindu   O Atheist

O Buddhist   O Don't Know

O Sikh   O Other_____

In Northern Ireland there are two main community identities; do you consider yourself to be part of the...
O Protestant community

O Catholic community

O Neither Catholic nor Protestant community

O Not sure

O Both Catholic and Protestant communities/mixed

If you chose 'both Catholic and Protestant communities/mixed', do you identify with one of those communities more strongly than the other?
O I feel more strongly Catholic

O I feel more strongly Protestant

O No – I identify as equally Catholic and Protestant

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To which ethnic group do you consider yourself to belong? Please tick all that apply.

O White   O Polish

O Chinese   O Romanian

O Black   O Lithuanian

O Indian   O Irish Traveller

O Portuguese   O Other_____

	Nearly all from your community background	More from your community than the other	A mixture	More from the other community than yours	All or nearly all from the other community
We want you to think about the neighbourhood where you live. Are the people there…?	o	o	o	o	o
On an average day, is it likely that the people you see would be…?	o	o	o	o	o

The following questions ask about your personal, family, and community experiences of conflict as a result of the Troubles.

What has been the impact of the conflict on…?	None	Low impact	Some impact	Moderate impact	High impact
The area where you live	O	O	O	O	O
Your family/people you live with	O	O	O	O	O
On you	O	O	O	O	O

Please indicate (by circling the number on a scale of 0-100) how disadvantaged you feel in everyday life because of..

	Not disadvantaged at all Very disadvantaged
…the level of income in your household	0-------10------20------30------40-------50------60------70--------80-------90-------100
….the area where you live	0-------10------20------30------40-------50------60------70--------80-------90-------100

Across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland there are a small number of integrated or mixed faith schools. This is when young people from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths, or none, go to school together (e.g. Lagan Integrated College in NI and Ballymakenny College in the Republic of Ireland).

Did you attend an integrated or mixed-faith school? Please tick all that apply.
□ Yes, primary school   □ Yes, post-primary school   □ No   □ Not sure

Shared education is when different schools work together to provide students with a wider variety of resources. One example is when students from one school take classes at a school other than their own.

Was your school involved in shared education?
□ Yes   □ No   □ Not sure

Have you participated in any other youth projects in the past 12 months?
□ Yes   (If yes, which one?_____)   □ No   □ Not sure

4

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

(Please remember you do not have to answer any questions you are uncomfortable with)

Please tell us how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	In the middle	Agree	Strongly agree
I take time to think about what I want from life	O	O	O	O	O
I know what values are important to me	O	O	O	O	O
I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a person	O	O	O	O	O
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	O	O	O	O	O
I feel that I'm a person of worth	O	O	O	O	O
I take a positive attitude toward myself	O	O	O	O	O

How much do the following statements describe you?

	Does not describe me at all	Does not describe me	In the middle	Describes me	Describes me a lot
I can deal well with change	O	O	O	O	O
No matter what comes my way, I'm usually able to handle it	O	O	O	O	O
I am confident I could interact with people who are different from me (e.g. different religion, ethnic background, disability status, etc)	O	O	O	O	O
I know how to find out about opportunities (e.g. jobs, courses, etc)	O	O	O	O	O
I have the confidence to speak up for what I believe in	O	O	O	O	O
I have the confidence to speak in a group	O	O	O	O	O
I feel that I can do things to improve my local community	O	O	O	O	O
I am willing to stand up against paramilitaries / dissidents/gang leaders in my community	O	O	O	O	O
Paramilitaries/dissidents/gang leaders control the way I behave in my community	O	O	O	O	O

How much do the following statements describe you?

	Does not describe me at all	Does not describe me	In the middle	Describes me	Describes me a lot
I am able to solve problems without harming myself or others	O	O	O	O	O
I try to plan ahead for things I want to achieve	O	O	O	O	O
I let other people make decisions for me	O	O	O	O	O
I have the willpower to stick to my decisions	O	O	O	O	O
I am determined	O	O	O	O	O

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	Does not describe me at all	Does not describe me	In the middle	Describes me	Describes me a lot
My friends know a lot about me	O	O	O	O	O
The people I am closest to stand by me during difficult times	O	O	O	O	O
For me, making new friends is easy	O	O	O	O	O
I know what a toxic friendship or relationship looks like	O	O	O	O	O
I know how to deal with a toxic friendship or relationship	O	O	O	O	O

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	In the middle	Agree	Strongly agree
I really like being a leader of a group	O	O	O	O	O
Project work gives me a chance to take a leading role in the group	O	O	O	O	O
I am often chosen to be the team leader or captain of a team	O	O	O	O	O

If you needed help, how likely is it you would turn to....

	Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Slightly likely	Likely	Extremely likely
Friend or partner	O	O	O	O	O	O
Parent or relative	O	O	O	O	O	O
Health professional (e.g. GP, mental health counsellor, etc)	O	O	O	O	O	O
Youth worker	O	O	O	O	O	O
I would look for advice online	O	O	O	O	O	O
I wouldn't seek help from anyone	O	O	O	O	O	O
Other_____	O	O	O	O	O	O

Have you ever lived in a residential home, hostel, or lived with a foster parent?

O Yes   O No   O Not sure

The next questions are about the people you consider your family. They may be relatives, people you're currently living with, or those you're closest to. Thinking about these people, how much do you disagree or agree...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
We really help and support one another	O	O	O	O	O	O
There is a feeling of togetherness between us	O	O	O	O	O	O
The people I live with don't do things together	O	O	O	O	O	O
We really get along with each other	O	O	O	O	O	O
The people I live with seem to avoid contact with each other when at home	O	O	O	O	O	O

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SECTION 2: GOOD RELATIONS

How much are the following statements like you?

	Not at all	A little bit	In the middle	Quite a lot	A lot
Even if I don't agree with someone, I still think their opinion is important	O	O	O	O	O
If I knew I was being unfair to someone, it would make me feel bad about myself	O	O	O	O	O
If there were new people in our neighbourhood who were different from everyone else, I would go out of my way to be friendly to them	O	O	O	O	O
When someone treats me kindly, I treat them kindly in return, no matter how different they are from me	O	O	O	O	O
It makes me happy when I see groups of different people getting along together	O	O	O	O	O
It bothers me when I see someone being picked on because they are different	O	O	O	O	O
I enjoy learning about other people's beliefs, traditions and ways of life	O	O	O	O	O
I understand why people who are different to me celebrate their cultural events	O	O	O	O	O
I think about what life must be like for people who are different to me	O	O	O	O	O
I am aware of how the Catholic community suffered as a result of the Troubles	O	O	O	O	O
I am aware of how the Protestant community suffered as a result of the Troubles	O	O	O	O	O
I know about the history, values & beliefs of my community	O	O	O	O	O
I know the meaning behind flags, murals and other symbols that are present in my community	O	O	O	O	O
I understand why people celebrate things such as concerts, plays, festivals, or other events that represent my community	O	O	O	O	O

Do you identify as..... (please circle as many as you want)

	If you said yes, how strongly do you identify as that nationality?				
	Not at all strongly	A little bit strongly	In the middle	Strongly	Very strongly
British? Yes / No	o	o	o	o	o
Irish? Yes / No	o	o	o	o	o
Northern Irish? Yes / No	o	o	o	o	o
Other nationality (please state)	o	o	o	o	o
None	o	o	o	o	o

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For the following questions, if you consider yourself part of the Catholic community, the "other" community would be the Protestant community. If you consider yourself part of the Protestant community, the "other" would be the Catholic community. If you are neither/unsure, the "other" would be a community other than your own.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
How often do you talk to young people from the other community **DURING PROJECT ACTIVITIES?**	O	O	O	O	O
How often do you talk face-to-face to young people from the other community **OUTSIDE OF the project?**	O	O	O	O	O
How often do you talk to young people from the other community online (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Fortnite, etc?)	O	O	O	O	O

	Always negative	Negative	In the middle	Positive	Always positive
DURING PROJECT ACTIVITIES, how negative or positive is the time you spend with young people from the other community	O	O	O	O	O
OUTSIDE OF the Project, how negative or positive is the time you spend with young people from the other community?	O	O	O	O	O

How much do you agree or disagree?

On the whole, members of my community, family, and friends want me to...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
...enjoy social activities together with members of the other community	O	O	O	O
...have a romantic relationship with someone from the other community	O	O	O	O
...have friends that are from the other community	O	O	O	O

How often do you spend your free time with young people who are...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Often
...from minority ethnic backgrounds?	O	O	O	O	O
...from the Irish Travelling Community?	O	O	O	O	O
...asylum seekers or refugees?	O	O	O	O	O

How happy were you when you spent time with young people who are....

	Does not apply	Very Unhappy	Unhappy	In the middle	Happy	Very Happy
...from minority ethnic backgrounds?	O	O	O	O	O	O
...from the Irish Travelling Community?	O	O	O	O	O	O
....asylum seekers or refugees?	O	O	O	O	O	O

8

In general, how negative or positive do you feel towards young people who are...

	Very negative	Negative	In the middle	Positive	Very positive
...from minority ethnic backgrounds?	O	O	O	O	O
...from the Irish Travelling Community?	O	O	O	O	O
...asylum seekers or refugees?	O	O	O	O	O
....from a different community background to you (e.g. Catholic, Protestant)	O	O	O	O	O
...from your own community background?	O	O	O	O	O

If you can, please think of a situation where you might meet other young people for the first time. Would you...

	Not at all	A little	In the middle	Quite a lot	Extremely
Feel nervous around those from the other community (e.g. Catholic, Protestant)?	O	O	O	O	O
Feel nervous around those from across the border?	O	O	O	O	O
Feel nervous around those from a different race or ethnic background to you?	O	O	O	O	O

Now we'd like to ask you about your close friends – friends that you spend a lot of time with, enjoy their company, and have a strong connection with.

About how many of your close friends are from...

	None	One or Two	Quite a few	About half	Most
...the other community (e.g. Catholic, Protestant)?	O	O	O	O	O
....across the border?	O	O	O	O	O
...a different race or ethnic background to you?	O	O	O	O	O

And how close do you feel you are to your friends from....

	Not close at all	A little close	In the middle	Close	Very close
...the other community (e.g. Catholic, Protestant)?	O	O	O	O	O
....across the border?	O	O	O	O	O
...a different race or ethnic background to you?	O	O	O	O	O

Thinking about relations between Protestants and Catholics, do you think...

They are **better** now than they were five years ago? (Please tick one)

□ Better   □ Worse   □ About the same   □ Don't know

They will be **better** in five years' time from now? (Please tick one)

□ Better   □ Worse   □ About the same   □ Don't know

9

How much do you agree or disagree?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
In the future, I would like to make new friends from other groups as much as I can	O	O	O	O	O
Even though I may have different views from my friends from different groups, I would work to maintain these friendships	O	O	O	O	O
In the future, I would be happy to let my children celebrate events/attend parades etc that are not part of my cultural tradition	O	O	O	O	O

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	In the middle	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I help my peers	O	O	O	O	O
I show recognition of the feelings of others	O	O	O	O	O
I am concerned when other people are distressed	O	O	O	O	O
I am kind towards other people	O	O	O	O	O
I am cooperative with other people	O	O	O	O	O
I offer help or comfort when other people are upset	O	O	O	O	O
I would help others if they asked me for help	O	O	O	O	O

Thinking about all these things above, how often do you do them towards people from...	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Sometimes	Frequently	Very often
Your own community?	0	1	2	3	4	5
The other community?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Thinking about where you live, how much do you agree or disagree with each statement?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Where I live, relations between Catholics and Protestants are an issue	O	O	O	O	O
Antisocial behaviour and crime is an issue in my area	O	O	O	O	O
I would like to bring my children up in the area where I live right now	O	O	O	O	O
I am proud to be from my area	O	O	O	O	O
I feel safe in my area	O	O	O	O	O

10

SECTION 3: CITIZENSHIP

Please indicate how often you have done each of the following activities in the past three months.

	Never	Rarely	A few times	Often	Very often
Taken part in a sponsored event	O	O	O	O	O
Volunteered your time	O	O	O	O	O
Helped with fundraising and collected money (for charity)	O	O	O	O	O
Worked together with others to solve a problem in your neighbourhood	O	O	O	O	O
Signed a petition	O	O	O	O	O
Campaigned on behalf of a group (or charity)	O	O	O	O	O
Taken part in a community group discussion on Whatsapp, Facebook etc	O	O	O	O	O
Chosen to buy from local shops/businesses instead of big companies	O	O	O	O	O

How much do you disagree or agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Peace walls in Northern Ireland should be taken down to improve community relations	o	o	o	o	o	o
The Northern Irish identity offers a shared identity which can help bring communities in Northern Ireland together	o	o	o	o	o	o
Integrated and shared education can help bring divided communities together	o	o	o	o	o	o
Political parties are preventing peace in Northern Ireland	o	o	o	o	o	o
The peace bridge in Derry-Londonderry is a physical symbol of change and cross-community engagement; more symbols like this are needed	o	o	o	o	o	o
Mixed sports teams of Catholic and Protestants encourage cross-community peacebuilding	o	o	o	o	o	o
Cross-border work is important to promote positive relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland	o	o	o	o	o	o
I worry about changes to the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland	o	o	o	o	o	o

11

	Very negative	Negative	No change	Positive	Very positive
The influence of the Brexit vote on community relations in my area has been....	○	○	○	○	○

Below is a list of behaviours that people do <u>to get at someone from the other community</u>. Please tell us how often you have done the following to get at the other community in the past three months.

	Never	Not in the last 3 months	Once in the past 3 months	Every month	Every week	Every day
Flown a flag to taunt/provoke people from the other community (for example, waving a flag that represents your community in the face of someone from a different community)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Worn a football jersey to taunt/provoke people from the other community (for example, walking through an area where most people are from a different community to you and you want to provoke people by wearing this top)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sang or chanted songs about the other community	○	○	○	○	○	○
Used text messaging or social media to taunt or tease someone from the other community	○	○	○	○	○	○

Within your own community, how often have you gotten involved in....

	Never	Not in the last 3 months	Once in the past 3 months	Every month	Every week	Every day
Feuds or fights	○	○	○	○	○	○
Anti-social behaviour (e.g. throwing stones, vandalism, etc)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other behaviour that could be upsetting to people who live there	○	○	○	○	○	○

Thank you for completing the survey!

If you have any questions or want to talk to the research team about the survey you can contact us by email at D.Blaylock@qub.ac.uk and Stephanie.Burns@qub.ac.uk

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Appendix E: Time 1 Survey (Illustrated) Phase 2

QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

Centre for Identity
and Intergroup
Relations
School of Psychology

Queen's University Belfast, University Road,
Belfast, BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projecks

We would like to ask you some questions about your experiences of the PEACE IV project. We would like to know about your experiences with other young people.

Your answers will be kept confidential. Only the evaluation team at Queen's University will see them. We do ask a few personal questions. If you find any of these questions upsetting, please talk to your youth worker.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. We just want to know what you think.

We will not use your name in any reports about the research. We will remove any information that could identify you from our reports so that no one will be able to know how you answered.

We will keep your information in a safe place on our computers. The information will be protected with a password. We will destroy it after 5 years unless you ask us to do so at an earlier date. You can ask us to destroy your data until we start to write our report.

You don't have to take part in this survey if you don't want to. If you change your mind during the survey, you can stop. You also don't have to answer any questions you don't want to answer.

Contact details
Please contact the researchers if you have any questions about this research.
Dr Danielle Blaylock
Email: d.blaylock@qub.ac.uk
Phone: 028 9097 4333]
Dr Stephanie Burns
Email: stephanie.burns@qub.ac.uk
Phone: 028 90975655
Address: Queen's University Belfast, School of Psychology, 18-30 Malone Road, Belfast BT7 1NN

Do you want to take part in the survey?

O Yes

O No

Before we get started, we need to ask for your ID code. You may need to ask your youth worker for this number.

Please use the following format for the ID number:

ProjectNameOrganisationNameCohortNumberYearFirst three letters of participant's surnameDay of birth

e.g. HeroesMencapCohort12019BUR12

What is your ID Number?

Youth worker: Please indicate whether Time 1 or Time 2 survey:

About You.

We'd like to know a little bit about you. You only need to answer the questions on this page the first time you do this survey – *please skip to page 3 if you have answered this page before.*

Do you live in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland?

Republic of Ireland   O

Northern Ireland   O

What is your gender?

Male   O

Female   O

Other   O

How old are you? _____

To which ethnic group do you consider yourself to belong? Please tick all that apply.

O	White	O	Polish
O	Chinese	O	Romanian
O	Black	O	Lithuanian
O	Indian	O	Irish Traveller
O	Portuguese	O	Other_____

In Northern Ireland there are two main community identities; do you consider yourself to be part of the...

Protestant community   O

Catholic community   O

Neither Catholic nor Protestant community O

Not sure   O

Both Catholic and Protestant / Mixed   O

What is the first half of your postcode (if in Northern Ireland) or the name of the town/village you are from?

_____

2

Your feelings and experiences.

Please read the sentences and circle the face which shows how you feel about it.

1. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a person

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. I take a positive attitude towards myself

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
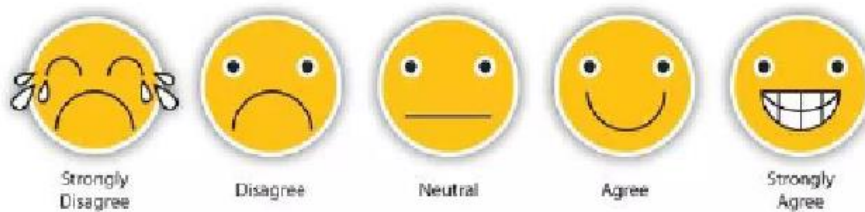
3. No matter what comes my way, I am usually able to handle it.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. I have the confidence to speak in a group

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3
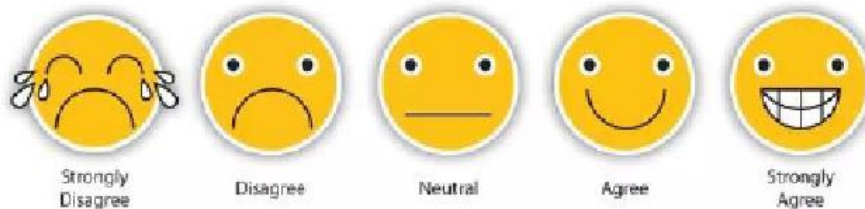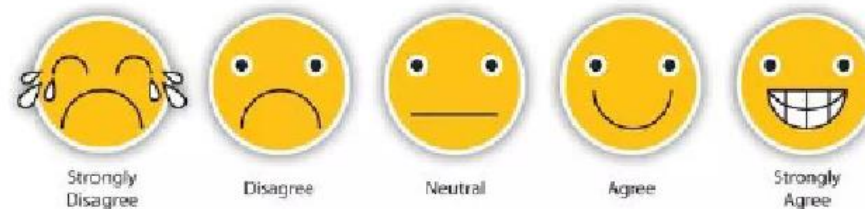
5. I try to plan ahead for things I want to do
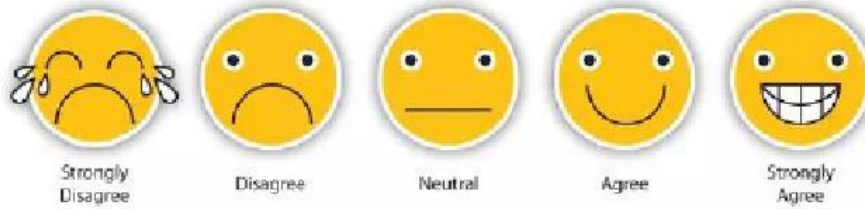
6. I am determined
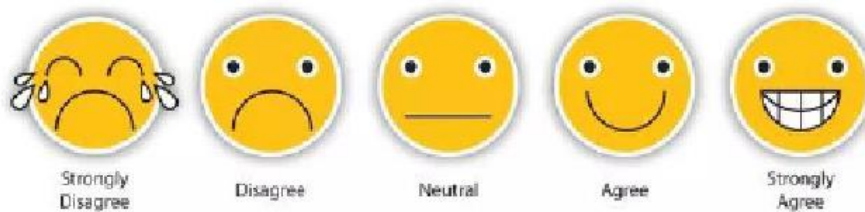
7. My friends know a lot about me
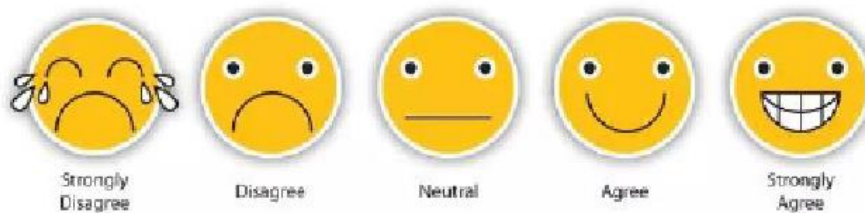
8. If you had a problem, who would you ask for help? You can tick more than one answer:

☐ Friend or partner

☐ Parent or relative

☐ Health professional (e.g. GP, mental health counsellor, etc)

☐ Youth worker

☐ I would look for advice online

☐ I wouldn't seek help from anyone

☐ Other (please tell us who)_____

4

Your interactions and relationships with others.

How much do you agree with this sentence?

9. I really like being a leader of a group.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	In the middle	Agree	Strongly agree

How much are the following sentences like you?

10. It bothers me when I see someone being picked on because they are different.

| not at all | a little bit | in the middle | quite a lot | very much |

11. I enjoy learning about other people's beliefs, traditions, and ways of life

| not at all | a little bit | in the middle | quite a lot | very much |

12. I know the meaning behind flags, murals, and other symbols that are present in my community

| not at all | a little bit | in the middle | quite a lot | very much |

5

The next question is about the people in your family. There are many different types of families – they may be your relatives, people you're currently living with, or those you're closest to.

Thinking about the people in your family, how much would you disagree or agree with the sentence below.

13. We really help and support one another

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

In Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, many people come from two main community backgrounds – Catholic and Protestant. You might be Catholic or Protestant, mixed, or neither.

For the next few series of questions we are interested in how you get along with young people who are from a different community to you.

14. In general, how often do you have positive experiences with young people from a different community during project activities?

| Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
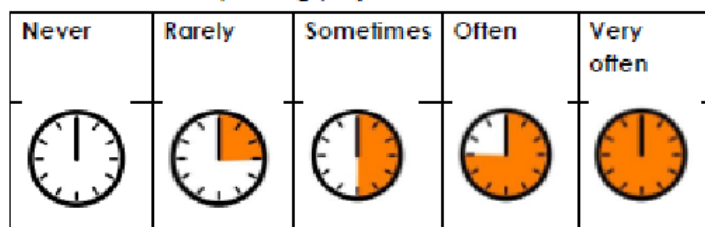
15. In general, how often do you have positive experiences with young people from a different community outside of project activities?

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often

6
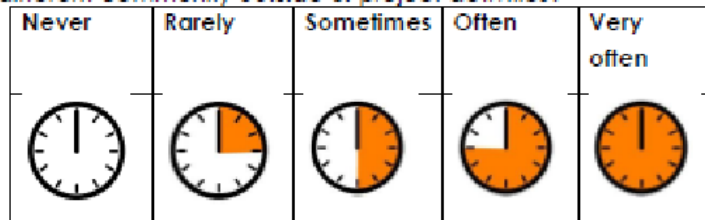
Please read the sentences and tick the circle the answer that is most like you.

|	Very negative	Negative	In the middle	Positive	Very positive
16. In general, how do you feel towards young people who are from minority ethnic backgrounds?					
17. In general, how do you feel towards young people who are from the Irish Travelling Community?					
18. In general, how do you feel towards young people who are asylum seekers or refugees?					
19. In general, how do you feel towards young people who are from a different community background to you (Catholic, Protestant)?					
20. In general, how do you feel towards young people from your own community background?					

7

21. How nervous would you feel meeting young people who are from a different community to you for the first time?

not at all	*a little bit*	*in the middle*	*quite a lot*	*extremely*
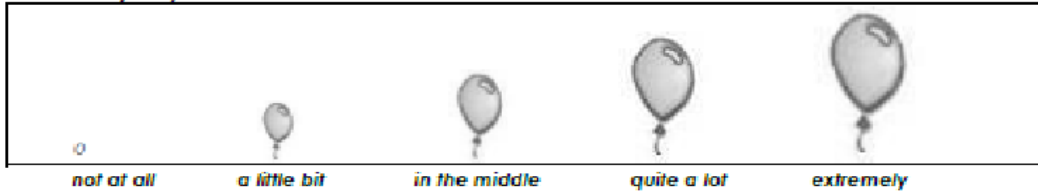
22. How nervous would you feel meeting young people who are from across the border for the first time?

|				
not at all	*a little bit*	*in the middle*	*quite a lot*	*extremely*
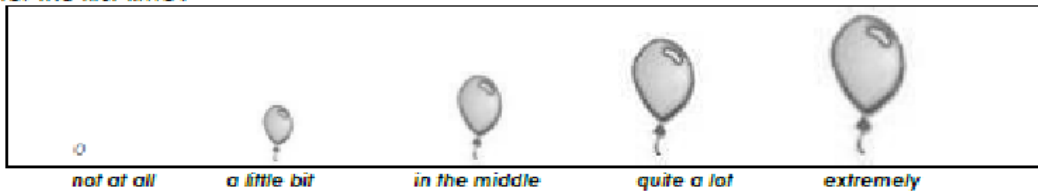
23. How nervous would you feel meeting young people who are from a different race or ethnic background to you for the first time?

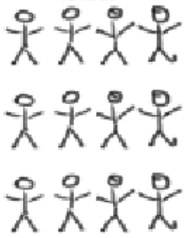|				
not at all	*a little bit*	*in the middle*	*quite a lot*	*extremely*
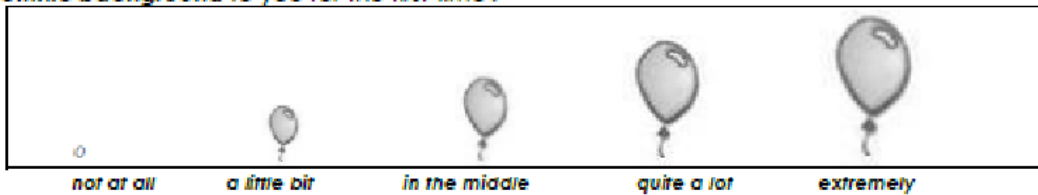
The next few questions are about your friends (the people you spend a lot of time with or talk to a lot, either in person or online).
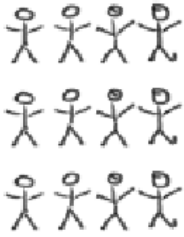
24. About how many of your friends are from the other community (e.g. Catholic, Protestant)?

None	One or two	Quite a few	About half	Most
X				

8
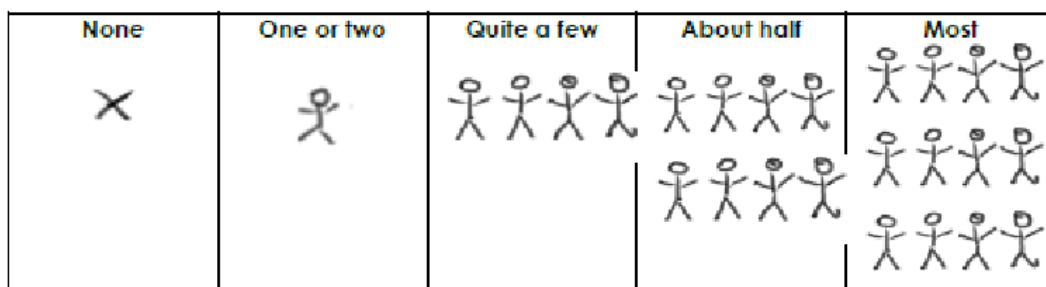
25. About how many of your friends are from across the border?

None	One or two	Quite a few	About half	Most
✕	🏃	🏃🏃🏃🏃	🏃🏃🏃🏃 🏃🏃🏃🏃	🏃🏃🏃 🏃🏃🏃 🏃🏃🏃

26. About how many of your friends are from a different race or ethnic background to you?

None	One or two	Quite a few	About half	Most
✕	🏃	🏃🏃🏃🏃	🏃🏃🏃🏃 🏃🏃🏃🏃	🏃🏃🏃 🏃🏃🏃 🏃🏃🏃

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

27. In the future, I would like to make new friends from other groups as much as I can

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

9

28. I would help other young people if they asked me for help.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

Last bit: Where you live

29. Where I live, relations between Catholics and Protestants are an issue

| not at all | a little bit | in the middle | quite a lot | very much |
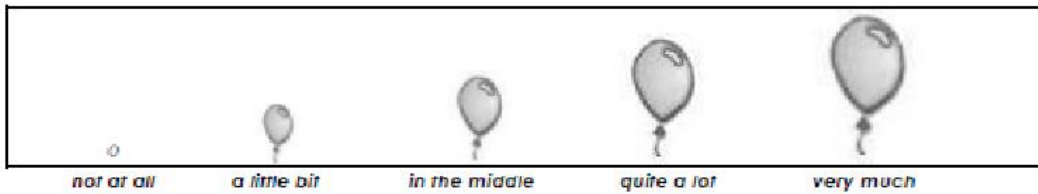
30. Antisocial behavior and crime is an issue in my area

| not at all | a little bit | in the middle | quite a lot | very much |

31. I am proud to be from my area

| not at all | a little bit | in the middle | quite a lot | very much |

10
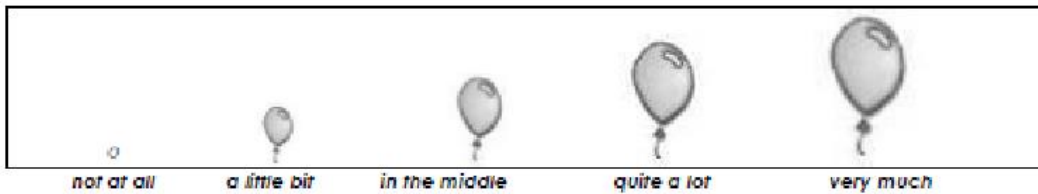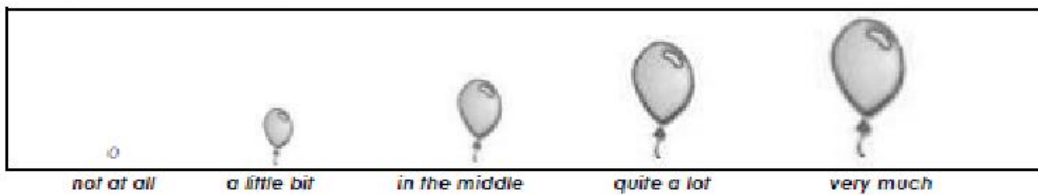
32. How often do you take part in fundraising activities or volunteer? (Please tick one)

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often

33. How often do you work with others to solve problems in your community? (Please tick one)

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often

34. How often have you done something on purpose to annoy someone who is from a different community to you?

Never	Not in the last 3 months	Once in the past 3 months	Every month	Every week	Every day
X					

35. Within your own community, how often have you gotten involved in behaviour that would be upsetting to the people who live there?

Never	Not in the last 3 months	Once in the past 3 months	Every month	Every week	Every day
X					

Thank you for completing the survey!

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Appendix F: Time 1 Survey (Arabic) Phase 2

Special EU Progrommes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projecks

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST | Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations School of Psychology

Queen's University Belfast, University Road,
Belfast, BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

نود أن نطرح عليك بعض الأسئلة حول تجاربك في مشروع الشباب. نود أن نعرف عن مواقفكم وتجاربكم مع الشباب الآخرين.

ستبقى إجاباتك سرية. فقط فريق التقييم في جامعة الملكة سوف يراهم. سوف نطرح بعض الأسئلة الشخصية. إذا وجدت أي من هذه الأسئلة مزعجة، يرجى التحدث إلى عامل الشباب الخاص بك.

لا توجد إجابات صحيحة أو خاطئة على الأسئلة. نريد فقط أن نعرف ما رأيك.

لن نستخدم اسمك في أي من التقارير. سنقوم بإزالة أي معلومات قد تحدد هويتك من تقاريرنا حتى لا يعرف أحد إجاباتك.

سنحتفظ بمعلوماتك في مكان آمن على أجهزة الكمبيوتر الخاصة بنا. سيتم حماية المعلومات بواسطة كلمة مرور. سوف ندمرها بعد 5 سنوات ما لم نطلب منا أن نفعل ذلك في وقت سابق. يمكنك أن تطلب أن تدمر بياناتك الى أن نبدأ في كتابة تقريرنا.

ليس من الضروري أن تشترك في هذا الاستطلاع إذا كنت لا تريد ذلك. إذا غيرت رأيك أثناء الاستطلاع، يمكنك التوقف. كما أنه ليس عليك الإجابة على أي أسئلة لا تريد الإجابة عليها.

تفاصيل الاتصال

يرجى الاتصال بالباحثين إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذا الاستطلاع:

Dr Danielle Blaylock
Email: d.blaylock@qub.ac.uk
Phone: 028 9097 4333]
Dr Stephanie Burns
Email: stephanie.burns@qub.ac.uk
Phone: 028 90975655
Address: Queen's University Belfast, School of Psychology, 18-30 Malone Road, Belfast BT7 1NN

هل تريد المشاركة في الاستطلاع؟

- نعم (YES)

- لا (NO)

قبل أن نبدأ، نحن بحاجة إلى أن نسأل عن رمز الهوية الخاص بك. قد تحتاج إلى أن تطلب من عامل الشباب الخاص بك إدخال هذا الرقم.

ما هو رقم هويتك؟

(Enter evaluation ID)

(Youth worker: Please indicate whether Time 1/ Time 2/ Time 3 Survey)

1

<u>بشأنك</u>

نود أن نعرف القليل عنك. عليك الإجابة فقط على الأسئلة في هذه الصفحة في المرة الأولى التي تقوم فيها بهذا الاستطلاع - يرجى الانتقال إلى الصفحة الثالثة إذا كنت قد أجبت على هذه الصفحة من قبل.

هل تعيش في جمهورية أيرلندا أو أيرلندا الشمالية؟

جمهورية أيرلندا _____

أيرلندا الشمالية_____

ما هي جنسك؟

ذكر _____

أنثى _____

الأخرى_____

إلى أي مجموعة عرقية تعتبر نفسك تنتمي؟ يرجى وضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق

البولندية		الأبيض	
الرومانية		الصينية	
الليتوانية		الأسود	
الرحالة الأيرلندي		الهندي	
أخرى		البرتغالية	

وتوجد في أيرلندا الشمالية هويتان مجتمعيتان رئيسيتان؛ هل تعتبر نفسك جزءا من ...

الطائفة البروتستانتية_____

الطائفة الكاثوليكية_____

لا الطائفة الكاثوليكية ولا البروتستانتية _____

لست متأكداً_____

الكاثوليكية والبروتستانتية على حد سواء / مختلطة_____

ما هو النصف الأول من الرمز البريدي الخاص بك (إذا كان في أيرلندا الشمالية) أو اسم المدينة / القرية التي تعيش فيها؟

_____

2

مشاعرك وتجاربك.

يرجى قراءة الجمل وضع دائرة حول الوجه الذي يظهر كيف تشعر حيال ذلك.

1. أنا على بينة من نقاط قوتي وضعفي كشخص

| أنا أعترض بشدة | أنا أعترض | محايد | أوافق | أوافق بشدة |

2. أنا اتخذا موقف إيجابي تجاه حياتي

| أنا أعترض بشدة | أنا أعترض | محايد | أوافق | أوافق بشدة |

3. بغض النظر عن ما يأتي في طريقي، أنا عادة قادر على التعامل معها.

| أن أعترض بشدة | أنا أعترض | محايد | أوافق | أوافق بشدة |

4. لدي الثقة في التحدث في مجموعة

| أن أعترض بشدة | أنا أعترض | محايد | أوافق | أوافق بشدة |

3

٥. أحاول أن أخطط مسبقا للأشياء التي أريد القيام بها

أوافق بشدة   أوافق   محايد   أنا أعترض   أنا أعترض بشدة

٦. أنا مصمم على ما يجب القيام به

أوافق بشدة   أوافق   محايد   أنا أعترض   أن أعترض بشدة

٧. أصدقائي يعرفون الكثير عني

أوافق بشدة   أوافق   محايد   أنا أعترض   أن أعترض بشدة

٨. إذا كان لديك مشكلة، من من ستطلب المساعدة؟ يمكنك وضع علامة على أكثر من إجابة واحدة:

□ صديق أو شريك

□ الأبوين أو الأقارب
□ طبيب أو مستشار

□ عامل الشباب

□ أود أن أبحث عن المشورة على الانترنت

□ أنا لا أطلب المساعدة من أي شخص

□ غير ذلك (من فضلك قل لنا من)
_____

4

<u>تفاعلاتك و علاقاتك مع الآخرين.</u>

كم توافق على هذه الجملة؟

9. أنا حقا أحب أن أكون قائد لمجموعة.

أنا أعارض بشدة	أنا أعارض	محايدة	أوافق	أوافق بشدة

كم هي الجمل التالية مثلك؟

10. يزعجني عندما أرى شخص ما يتعرض للتخويف لأنه مختلف.

ابدا	قليلا	في الوسط	كثير	الغايه

11. أنا أستمتع بالتعلم عن معتقدات الآخرين وتقاليدهم وطرق حياتهم

ابدا	قليلا	في الوسط	كثير	الغايه

12. أعرف المعنى وراء الأعلام والجداريات والرموز الأخرى في مجتمعي

ابدا	قليلا	في الوسط	كثير	الغايه

5

السؤال التالي هو عن الناس في عائلتك. هناك العديد من الأنواع المختلفة من الأسر ـ قد يكون أقاربك، أو الأشخاص الذين تعيش معهم حالياً، أو الأشخاص الأقرب إليك.

اذا فكرت في الناس في عائلتك، كم تختلف أو توافق على الجملة أدناه.

13. نحن حقا نساعد وندعم بعضنا البعض
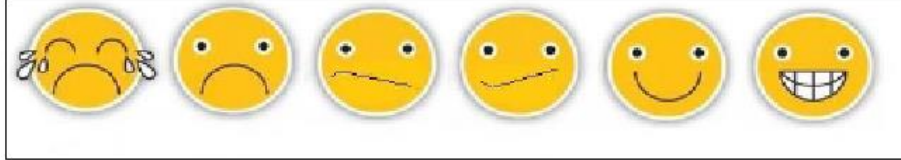
في أيرلندا الشمالية وجمهورية أيرلندا، يأتي العديد من الناس من خلفيتين مجتمعيتين رئيسيتين ـ الكاثوليكية والبروتستانتية. قد تكون كاثوليكياً أو بروتستانتياً، مختلطاً، أو لا.

في السلسلة القليلة القادمة من الأسئلة نحن مهتمون ان نتعلم عن كيفية انسجامك مع الشباب الذين هم من مجتمع مختلف عنك.

14- وبوجه عام، ما هو عدد المرات التي تشهد فيها تجارب إيجابية مع شباب من مجتمع محلي مختلف أثناء أنشطة المشاريع؟

ابدا	نادرا ما	احيانا	غالبا ما	دائما
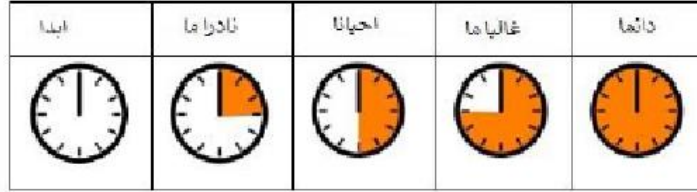
15- وبوجه عام، ما هو عدد المرات التي تشهد فيها تجارب إيجابية مع شباب من مجتمع محلي مختلف عندما لا تكون في البرنامج؟

ابدا	نادرا ما	احيانا	غالبا ما	دائما
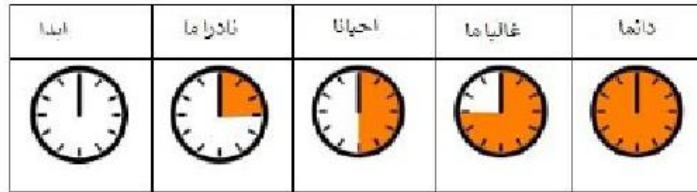
يرجى قراءة الجمل ووضع علامة على الدائرة الجواب الذى هو الأكثر مثلك.

	إيجابي جداً	إيجابيه	في الوسط	السلبيه	سلبي جداً
16- بوجه عام، ما هو شعورك تجاه الشباب المنتمس إلى أقليات إثنية؟					
17. بشكل عام، ما هو شعورك تجاه الشباب الذين هم من مجتمع السفر الأيرلندى؟					
18- بوجه عام، ما هو شعورك تجاه الشباب من ملتمسي اللجوء أو اللاجئين؟					
19. بشكل عام، ما هو شعورك تجاه الشباب الذين هم من خلفية مجتمعية مختلفة عنك (الكاثوليكية والبروستانتية)؟					
20. بشكل عام، ما هو شعورك تجاه الشباب من خلفيتك المجتمعية؟					

7

21. ما مدى التوتر الذى تشعر به عند مقابلة الشباب الذين ينتمون إلى مجتمع مختلف بالنسبة لك لأول مرة؟

ابدا	قليلا	فى الوسط	كثير	الغايه

22. ما مدى التوتر الذى تشعر به عند مقابلة الشباب الذين هم من عبر الحدود لأول مرة؟

ابدا	قليلا	فى الوسط	كثير	الغايه

23. ما مدى التوتر الذى تشعر عند مقابلة الشباب الذين ينتمون إلى عرق أو خلفية عرقية مختلفة بالنسبة لك لأول مرة؟

ابدا	قليلا	فى الوسط	كثير	الغايه
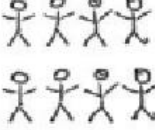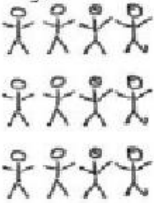
الأسئلة القليلة التالية هي عن أصدقائك (الأشخاص الذين تمضي الكثير من الوقت معهم أو تتحدث إليهم كثيرا، سواء شخصيا أو عبر الإنترنت).
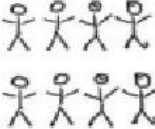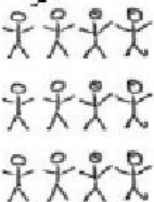
24. كم من أصدقائك هم من المجتمع الأخر (على سبيل المثال الكاثوليكية والبروتستانتية)؟

اي	واحد أو اثنين	قليل	حوالي نصف	اخر

25. كم من أصدقائك يعيشون على الجانب الآخر من الحدود الأيرلندية؟

اي	واحد أو اثنين	قليل	حوالي نصف	اخر
✗				

26. كم من أصدقائك هم من عرق أو خلفية عرقية مختلفة عنك؟

اي	واحد أو اثنين	قليل	حوالي نصف	اخر
✗				

كم توافق أو لا توافق على البيانات التالية؟

27. في المستقبل، أود تكوين صداقات جديدة من مجموعات أخرى بقدر ما أستطيع

أنا أعترض بشدة	أنا أعترض	محايده	أوافق	أوافق بشدة
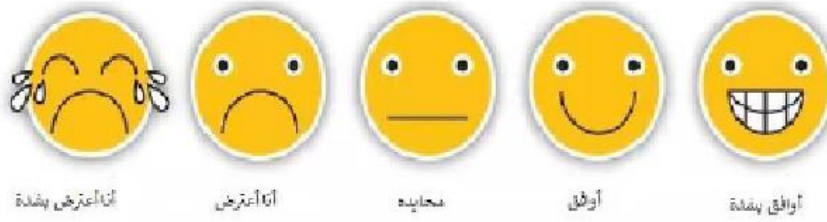
28. أود أن أساعد الشباب الآخرين إذا طلبوا مني المساعدة.

أنا أعترض بشدة	أنا أعترض	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة

9

<div dir="rtl">

آخر جزء: حيك

29. حيث أعيش، العلاقات بين الكاثوليك والبروتستانت هي مسألة

| أبدا | قلما | في الوسط | كثير | الغايه |

30. السلوك المعادى للمجتمع والجريمة هي قضية في حيي

| أبدا | قلما | في الوسط | كثير | الغايه |

31. أنا فخور بالعيش في حيي

| أبدا | قلما | في الوسط | كثير | الغايه |

32. كم مرة تشارك في أنشطة جمع الأموال أو التطوع؟ (يرجى وضع علامة واحدة)

ابدا	نادرا ما	احيانا	غاليا ما	دائما

</div>

10

|311
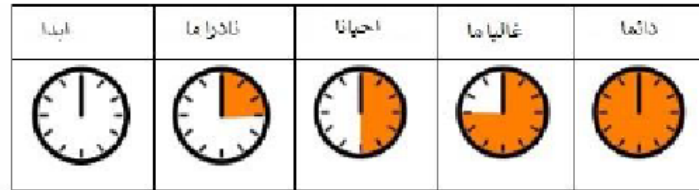
33. كم مرة تعمل مع الآخرين لحل المشاكل في مجتمعك؟ (يرجى وضع علامة واحدة)

ابدا	نادرا ما	احيانا	غالبا ما	دائما
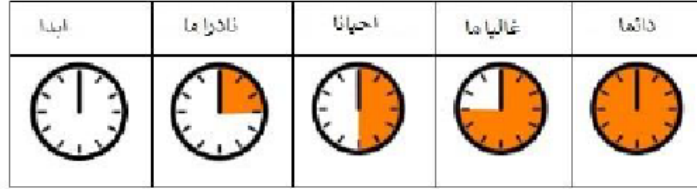
34. كم مرة قمت بعمل شيء عن قصد لإزعاج شخص من مجتمع مختلف عنك؟

ابدا	ليس في الأشهر الثلاثة الأخيرة	مرة واحدة في الأشهر الثلاثة الماضية	كل شهر	كل أسبوع	كل يوم
X					

35. داخل مجتمعك، كم مرة تورطت في سلوك من شأنه أن يزعج الناس الذين يعيشون هناك؟

ابدا	ليس في الأشهر الثلاثة الأخيرة	مرة واحدة في الأشهر الثلاثة الماضية	كل شهر	كل أسبوع	كل يوم
X					

(TIME 3 ONLY)

<u>يرجى الإجابة على هذه الأسئلة إذا كنت قد وصلت الى نهاية مشروع الشباب الخاص بك</u>

ماذا ستفعل بمجرد الانتهاء من مشروع الشباب الخاص بك؟ ضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق:

- مشروع آخر للشباب/المجتمع المحلي
- العمل التطوعي/ التطوع
- العمل المدفوع الأجر (دوام جزئي أو دوام كامل)
- التدريب المعتمد (على سبيل المثال شهادة OCN ، شهادة(FETAC
- التدريب على العمل أو التلمذة الصناعية أو التدريب الداخلي
- التعليم (المدرسة الثانوية/الدرجة الإعدادية)
- التعليم (AS أو A مستويات / شهادة المغادرة)
- دورة كلية التعليم العالي
- الكلية أو أي جامعة أخرى (دورة بدوام جزئي أو بدوام كامل)
- رعاية أحد أفراد العائلة أو الأصدقاء

11

o أنا لا أخطط لفعل أى شيء

o لست متأكداً بعد

كم استمتعت بالقيام بأنشطة مع شباب آخرين؟

هل حصلت على أي مؤهلات/ تدريب معتمد أثناء القيام بمشروع الشباب الخاص بك؟ يرجى وضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق:

o التأهيل في مجال التنمية الشخصية (مثل الثقة؛ والحياة الصحية؛ والتوعية بالمخدرات؛ والتخطيط المالي)

o التأهيل في مجال العلاقات الجيدة (مثل حل النزاعات؛ والتوعية بالتنوع)

o التأهيل في مجال المواطنة (مثل العمل التطوعي؛ وتوجيه الأقران؛ والتنمية المجتمعية)

o المهارات الأساسية

o الصحة والسلامة/الإسعافات الأولية

o مؤهلات أخرى

o لا شيء

o أنا لا أعرف

سوف نتواصل معك في وقت ما من العام القادم لإكمال المسح النهائي. للقيام بذلك، نحن بحاجة إلى تزويدنا بعنوان البريد الإلكتروني أو الفيسبوك / رسول / تويتر / اسم المستخدم إينستاجرام أو رقم الهاتف حتى نتمكن من إرسال لك رابط الاستطلاع:

عنوان البريد الإلكتروني/جهة الاتصال

_____

شكرا لك على إكمال الاستطلاع!

Appendix G: Early Exit Survey Phase 2

The survey you are about to complete is an EXIT SURVEY to explore what young people feel about the time they spent in their Peace4Youth project.

Your answers will be kept confidential; only the evaluation team at Queen's University will see them. Your participation is voluntary and you can leave out any questions you do not want to answer.

The survey should only take about 5 minutes to complete. This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers, we just want to know what you think so please answer as honestly as possible.

How will the information be stored?
If you agree to participate, your name will not be used in any reports that are written and published about the research. In accordance with Queen's University policy, all electronic data will be held on a secure server for a period of no less than 5 years and then destroyed. Any hard copies of the survey will be entered as soon as possible into the online database by your youth worker and will then be shredded.

What will happen with the information?
The findings of this evaluation will be reported in several ways. Reports and verbal presentations will be given to the Special European Union Programmes Body throughout the course of the evaluation. Also, the leader of your project will receive anonymised data from every completed survey for their project every 3 months; NO ONE will be able to identify your answers from this. The data gathered during the project may also be analysed for presentation and publication in academic conferences and journals.

Are there any risks?
We will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of those who take part in the research – this means we will not tell anyone you have participated and we will remove your name from all reports and raw data. To further disguise each person's identity, we will combine your responses with other people's responses so that general trends and issues are reported to the Special European Union Programmes Body.

What are the benefits of taking part?
It is important that the Special European Union Programmes Body understands the impact of the PEACE IV Specific Objective 2.1 and whether or not the funding has made a difference. By taking part in this evaluation you will be doing just that. It is also hoped that you would find the surveys to be an enjoyable opportunity to express your opinions and share your experiences.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate and you may also ask for your information to be removed up until the time that the data is analysed; after which time we will not be able to remove the data. The decision to withdraw will bring no negative consequences to you or impact your relationship with the researchers, the Centre for Identity and Intergroup Relations, Queen's University, or the Special European Union Programmes Body.

Contact details
If you have any further questions about the study or about what your involvement might require, please do not hesitate to contact Danielle Blaylock or Stephanie Burns via phone, email, or the postal address below:
Dr Danielle Blaylock [d.blaylock@qub.ac.uk, 028 9097 4333]
Dr Stephanie Burns [stephanie.burns@qub.ac.uk, 028 90975655]
Queen's University Belfast, School of Psychology, 18-30 Malone Road, Belfast BT7 1NN

1

Before we get started it is very important that we have a way to match up your surveys. Instead of asking for your name, one way we are doing this is by asking you for a unique ID number. Please know that we will not use this information for any other purpose other than to match your surveys.

We will never know your name.

* You may need to ask a staff member for help to get your ID number *

Please use the following format for ID number:

ProjectNameOrganisationNameCohortNumberYearFirst **three** letters of participant's surnameDay of birth

e.g. YOUTHSCAPESWCCohort12019BUR12

e.g. AMPLIFYForoigeCohort22020MCL10

ID Number_____

If you want to continue taking part in our survey, please tick Yes below.

○ Yes

○ No

1. What will you be doing after you leave this PEACE IV youth project? Please tick all that apply:

○ Another youth project/community project
○ Voluntary work/volunteering
○ Paid work (part-time or full-time)
○ Accredited training (e.g. OCN certificate, FETAC Certificate)
○ Job training, an apprenticeship or an internship
○ Education (GCSEs/Junior Certificate)
○ Education (AS or A Levels/Leaving Certificate)
○ Further Education College course
○ Other College or University (part-time or full-time course)
○ Looking after /caring for a family member or friend
○ I don't plan to do anything
○ I'm not sure yet
○ Other_____

2. How much have you enjoyed doing activities with the other young people? Please tick:

Not at all	A little bit	I'm in the middle	Quite a lot	Very much

3. What is the main reason why you are leaving this PEACE IV project early? (You don't have to answer this if you don't want to)

_____

4. Did you get any qualifications /do accredited training while you were doing your PEACE IV youth project? Please tick all that apply:

○ Qualification in a personal development area (e.g. confidence; healthy living; drugs awareness; financial planning)
○ Qualification in a good relations area (e.g. conflict resolution; diversity awareness)
○ Qualification in a citizenship area (e.g. volunteering; peer mentoring; community development)
○ Essential Skills
○ Health & Safety/First Aid
○ Other qualification
○ None
○ I don't know

For the final phase of the evaluation we will be reaching out to you sometime next year to complete the final survey. To do so, we need you to provide us with an **email address or Facebook/ Messenger/ Twitter/ Instagram username or phone number** so that we may send you the link to complete the survey:

Email Address/Contact*:_____

Thank you for completing the survey!

If you have any questions or want to talk to the research team about the survey you can contact us by email at D.Blaylock@qub.ac.uk and Stephanie.Burns@qub.ac.uk

Appendix H: Focus Group Protocol 2018

PEACE4YOUTH Evaluation Focus Group – Question Schedule

- *Introductions – go over the different types of questions we will be asking (Key success factors and challenges affecting project implementation; Discussion of the three core outcome areas of the overall programme (personal development, good relations, citizenship); Relationships between delivery organisations and wider youth sector and community)*
- *Please state your first name, the project you are affiliated with, and what sort of cohort you work on (type of activities, profile of the young people, area)*
- *Reminder about confidentiality and anonymity – has everyone signed consent form?*
- *Check it is OK to record the interview.*
- *Check whether there are any questions.*
****

Introductory questions

1. Casting your minds back, can you describe the beginning of your project - what or who was the main impetus/driving force?
2. Can you talk about the ways in which the organisations in your project have collaborated before – how if at all is the Peace4youth partnership different from other collaborative work?

Challenges

1. What were the challenges your project faced in getting set up? (prompt – recruitment? Staffing?)
   a. To what extent have these challenges been external factors?
   b. (DFE) have you had specific challenges in terms of participation rates and attrition? If so, what do you think are the factors behind this?
   c. (DFE) have you had any specific challenges in recruiting different age groups? If so, what do you think are the reasons for this?
   d. (DFE) do have any comment to make in terms of recruitment and participation of young people from across Section 75 categories?
   e. (DFE) what has been the impact of the incentive payment and welfare benefit flexibilities in NI on recruitment and retention?
   f. (DFE) do you have any comments to make in terms of the recruitment and participation of young people with varying levels of labour market status and educational attainment?
   g. What level of support do you think there is from all of the parents/wider community for the project?
   h. How do you think your particular context/location has impacted the way you work as a project?

2. How have organisations within your respective projects managed to overcome challenges related to practicalities, if at all? (e.g. transport, staffing)
3. How have organisations within your respective projects managed to overcome challenges related to differences in the way you view peacebuilding work, youth work, differences in ethos etc?

      a. (If applicable) were these differences explicitly discussed at the outset?
4. What are the continuing challenges today?
5. Do you foresee any challenges that haven't yet arisen?

Factors influencing success
1. What have been the main internal factors (i.e. within project or your own specific organisation) that have positively influenced your ability to achieve your project's aims and objectives?
2. What have been the external factors that have positively influenced your ability to achieve your project's aims and objectives?
      a. Prompt – how has SEUPB/NI executive/Dept of Children and Youth Affairs been a positive influence?
      b. How have other young sector agencies and delivery organisations worked together to meet the aims of the projects?
      c. Can you talk a bit about the influence of YouthPact – how if at all has that helped your project in terms of starting up, the work you do, your impact on young people and the wider community?
      d. How would you like YouthPact to support your project going forward?
      e. What other supports would be useful to have in place in the future (e.g. from external/statutory agencies? SEUPB?)

Impact and Outcomes
1. Going through the outcome indicators for the programme, can we discuss the first big one, Good relations. The programme outcome criteria include: understanding of and respect for diversity; an awareness of and sensitivity to the values, beliefs and customs and traditions of others; an understanding of their own identity; respect for others from different community and cultural backgrounds, abilities and orientations; a positive predisposition to others from a different community/cultural background. Which of these are you hoping to see change in as a result of young people's involvement in your programme?
      a. Are any of those indicators more important/more likely to change through the PEACE4Youth programme than others? Why? Which indicators might be less likely to show change?
      b. What other good relations indicators would be worthwhile to look at?

2. The second outcome is Personal Development. The programme outcome criteria include: increased self-awareness & understanding; confidence; agency; planning &problem solving; relationships & working effectively with others; leadership; resilience & determination; knowledge and skills for supporting own health and wellbeing. Which of these are you hoping to see change in as a result of young people's involvement in your programme?
      a. Are any of those indicators more important/more likely to change through the PEACE4Youth programme than others? Why? Which indicators might be less likely to show change?
      b. What other personal development indicators would be worthwhile to look at?

3. The third and final outcome is Citizenship. The programme outcome criteria include: engagement with useful services; positive participation in community structures, initiatives and democratic processes; volunteering in communities of place and/or interest; positive family relations; and

positive community relations. Which of these are you hoping to see change in as a result of young people's involvement in your programme?

    a.   Are any of those indicators more important/more likely to change through the PEACE4Youth programme than others? Why? Which indicators might be less likely to show change?

    b.   What other citizenship indicators would be worthwhile to look at?

4. How have the challenges we previously talked about impacted your ability to achieve your project's aims and objectives, outcomes?

5. Conversely, how have the positive influencing factors (in terms of help from other agencies) impacted how successful you are in achieving your aims and objectives?

6. What do you think the impact of the project has been on the wider community, if any? (including young people's families – any extended impact?)

    a.   Have any of the citizenship/volunteering/community based activities going on as part of the project led to wider, positive effects in the community/communities?

7. What sorts of project activities do you feel have been most successful to date in terms of achieving the aims and objectives of your project? Can you explain why these were so successful?

8. What sorts of project activities to date have not worked as well? Why do you think they weren't as successful?

Sustainability and building peace in Future

1. Looking ahead into Phase II, how if at all would you change things (what would you improve)?
2. What are your views on the best way to advance peacebuilding in Northern Ireland?

Any other questions/comments?

Appendix I: Focus Group Protocol 2019 / 2020

PEACE4YOUTH Evaluation Focus Groups 2019 – Question Schedule

- *Introductions – go over the different types of questions we will be asking*
    - ○ *The successes and challenges of implementing Phase II*
    - ○ *The connection between core project activities (e.g., provision of one-to-one support/mentoring; residentials) and the achievement of outomes)*
    - ○ *The involvement of families (and other key support networks in young people's lives)*
    - ○ *External influences that have helped or hindered project impact)*

- *Please state your first name, the project you are affiliated with, and what sort of cohort you work on (type of activities, profile of the young people, area)*

- *Reminder about confidentiality and anonymity – has everyone signed consent form?*

- *Check it is OK to record the interview.*

- *Check whether there are any questions.*

****

(i) Casting your minds back, can you describe the beginning of Phase II?

- When did it start?
- How has it been different from Phase 1? What learning/changes did you bring forward?
- What kind of cohorts have you recruited? Have they changed since Phase 1? Any particular challenges or successes? i.e. different equality status groups; specific challenges with age groups; specific engagement and retention challenges – use of incentive? Are most young people at a particular level in terms of job experience or educational background?
- Staffing – recruitment? Enough resources/support to do job you have to do?
- Space and location – how has your particular context impacted the way you work?
- Any other comments on additional support received from SEUPB, YouthPact, government departments, or other external agencies?

(ii) Now that projects are a year (at least) down the road in terms of working with partner agencies, how do you feel the organisations and the partnership have evolved?

- Have there been specific challenges to overcome in regard to partnership working?
- Have there been obvious benefits in terms of the way things are done and the impact of the projects?
- What extra support or training do you think your organisation might need in terms of partnership working?

Now I'd like to talk a little about the impact of the programme, specifically in terms of the connection between particular features of the project activity and the achievement of project outcomes.

The Phase 1 report showed that young people across the programme showed positive changes in terms of:

Good Relations:

Respect for diversity and in multiple indicators of having a _positive predisposition towards others from a different community or cultural background_. This included the frequency and quality of contact with others from a different community background both during and outside of project activities, a greater frequency of contact with individuals from minority ethnic groups, more positive attitudes towards members of minority ethnic groups, and a stronger sense of self-efficacy for forming friendships with individuals from a different group than themselves.

No change – understanding own identity; number of cross-community and cross-border friendships.

Personal Development:

Young people reported a significant increase in _confidence, planning and problem solving, leadership skills, resilience and determination,_ and _other relevant knowledge and skills for supporting their own health and well-being_. They also reported significantly improved sense of _personal agency;_ however, no change was evident on sense of agency in their community. There were no significant improvements in participants' reported _positive relations / working effectively with others_ or levels of _self-awareness and understanding_.

Citizenship:

Positive change - _engagement with useful services, volunteering in communities of place and/or interest,_ and _positive family relations_. No change - Interestingly, while there was no significant change in self-reported participation in sectarian behaviours, _there were positive changes in reported civic engagement and support for peacebuilding._

(iii) I would like to make some connections between these findings and the findings from YouthPact's study on the youth work practice that is happening across the programme; for example, what is it about the design of the projects that have led to the changes we have observed?

- What is the role of the relationship between young person and youth worker – the mentorship, or having one to one sessions, having a role model figure in a youth worker?
- Diversity of the group?
- The project timeline – single identity work, personal development work first; then cross-community work, group work, citizenship activities? Is there a specific order? How structured or unstructured can it be – is it fully youth-led?
- What is the significance of residentials/camping? Is it time – time to tell stories? Time to make friendships –unstructured time?
- Are there any other key features or activities that have been most successful to date in terms of achieving the aims and objectives of your project? Can you explain why these were so successful? (Routine, boundaries, repetition, tenacity, kindness in language, openly showing emotions, development of critical thinking skills)

(iv) What is your project's view of the citizenship aspect of the work? Is it linked to nationality, contested decision making, take a right's based perspective to citizenship i.e. status, rights and responsibilities of being a citizen – but recognising place and status leads to discussions of belonging to a group and identity. How do you deal with that? Is it the responsibilities aspect that

is given most attention (e.g. volunteering)? Is 'being a citizen' linked to local community or wider society?

- What's the connection between those citizenship activities and personal development? Do they develop in tandem, or are there certain aspects of one that you have to develop before you can work on another? E.g. confidence building before volunteering; volunteering leading to increased self-efficacy.

(v) Many young people have stated that they don't feel like the Good Relations aspect of the work is relevant to them. How exactly do you bring up the community relations aspect of the work? How do you make it relevant to their lives, and not just a 'history of the Troubles' lesson?

- Similarly, a substantial number of young people we have spoken to said they do not identify with the community categorisations of PUL/CNR, that they are neither, mixed, or other. Can you comment on that? Do you think it is because they aren't aware of their family background, the use of the terms, or is it a conscious choice to reject those terms?

(vi) Can you tell me a bit about how you involve families if at all in the project?

- How much contact do you have with family members? Are family members involved at all stages (relationships built with them), or are there certain times in particular when their support and involvement is needed?
- To what extent are families 'gatekeepers' in terms of a young person's decision to sign up? How much 'buy-in' do you think is needed from families for a young person to successfully complete the project? Are there noticeable age group or gender or background differences?
- To what extent do you feel like you are discussing family norms as well as individual attitudes when doing good relations work?
- Have you had any instances where a family member has rejected or clashed with any aspect of the project, particularly in terms of the good relations or citizenship work that a young person has been involved in?
- In your experience, have you had a situation where a young person's participation in the project has led to a change in attitude/behaviours of other members of their family?
- Do you have any comment on transgenerational trauma and family mental health issues in relation to the impact on the young people you work with?
- How does the project directly or indirectly promote/increase family cohesion?

(vii) I want to ask a little about young people transitioning onto something else once their involvement in the project finishes. To date we have heard feedback from youth workers that 6 months is not enough, or that they wish a young person could go on to another Peace IV programme or a related programme afterwards. What do you think is the best way to support young people when they leave a project, to ensure the sustainability of outcomes?

- Are there any other ways in which the projects could be built upon for the future, to help ensure sustainability?

(viii) Are there any other external influences that help or hinder project impact?

(ix) Any other comments or questions?

Appendix J: Focus Group Protocol 2022

Thanks for giving up your time to join this focus group, we really appreciate it. My name is Nargis Khan, and I am part of the Peace IV Evaluation Team in QUB. I will be serving as a moderator for today's focus group discussion. This is Caoihme and Cecilia, my assistants and will be taking notes during the discussion.

The main purpose of today's discussion is to explore your views on the closure of the programme and sustainability of the programme moving forward. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I am about to ask. We expect that you will have differing points of view. Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. If you want to follow up on something that someone has said, you want to agree, disagree, or give an example, feel free to do that. Feel free to have a conversation with one another about these questions. I am here to ask questions, listen, and make sure everyone has a chance. I will be tape recording the discussion as I don't want to miss any of your comments. Finally, I would like to remind you that all the information shared in this discussion stay here. Any question before we begin?

Warm up questions
- Let's begin by having each person tell us their name, project's name and their role.
- How long have you been participating in this programme?
- What kinds of cohorts were you recruiting? Had they changed since earlier stages of the programme?
- What are your thoughts on how the projects have rolled out if you have been part of the project for a longer time?
- How well the programme met the intended goals?
- What were the key aspects of the intervention that led to success?
- What were the challenges (internal and external factors)

Sustainability of the programme
- What are your views on sustainability of the projects moving forward?
- What elements of the projects are likely to be sustained or eliminated?
- Do you think any elements of the projects could be further enhanced?
   o Training to support young people with mental health issues
   o Training to work effectively with those from ethnic minority backgrounds
- What are your views on a hybrid model – online and face-to-face delivery of the projects?

Closure of the Programme
- What are your thoughts about the closure of the programme?
   o What strategies should be adopted for realistic exit plan?
   o What challenges might be faced?
Impact on Staff members
- How do you think the projects staff will be affected by the closure of the programme?

- What is the best way moving forward: Do you think the knowledge and skills gained in the project would be helpful in your future career?

Impact on young people

- What are your views on the process of transition for young people out of the programme?
- Do you think these projects will have lasting impacts on young people?
- Do you think young people would be at a loss not having these projects?
- Any other impacts that you think we haven't talked about?

Appendix K: Covid-19 Period Arrangements Guidance for Projects on Outputs and Recruitment

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Memorandum

To:	Lead Partners, PEACE4YOUTH PEACE IV Projects
From:	Leanne Massey
Date:	22 May 2020
	COVID-19 PERIOD ARRANGEMENTS
Re:	**GUIDANCE FOR PROJECTS ON OUTPUTS AND RECRUITMENT**

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you and your teams are safe at this time. I would like to begin by thanking you for the changes you have made to your projects in order to deliver activity in the current circumstances, due to the COVID-19 crisis. The speed of change to online delivery has been truly impressive. This memo will set out the temporary arrangements that are being put in place to ensure that Lead Partners and Project Partners can continue to deliver for young people during this challenging time.

The SEUPB would like to thank you for engaging with YouthPact in the creation of this guidance, which is based on your evolving experiences of project delivering in lockdown. We would also like to thank YouthPact their role in helping to collate this information.

As you will have seen from previous correspondence, new emergency arrangements for payment have been put in place to support projects and you can avail of this by contacting the SEUPB Financial Controller (alistair.mackenzie@seupb.eu).

COVID-19 temporary changes to Output Indicator Guidance

The SEUPB wish to provide projects with assurance at this time that some requirements outlined in the Output Indicator Guidance (relating to contact hours) will be temporarily put

on hold from the 1st March 2020 until further notice due to the impact that COVID-19 is having on project delivery. This temporary arrangement will be under constant review and projects will be notified of any changes going forward. A formal review will take place at the end of August 2020.

The SEUPB will put in place revised temporary elements of the Output Indicator Guidance in order for projects to evidence outputs and achievement towards targets during this time.

The change will be in the minimum weekly contact hours, based on the Output Indicator Guidance SEUPB and Peace4Youth projects have arrived at the stated minimum requirement of 249hrs contact and one of the key parts of output verification is evidencing the following minimum.

Programme	Age profile	Time period	Minimum weekly contact hours	Community Cohort
Programme Minimum	14 - 24 years	Min 6 Months Offered	26 weeks at 12 hours a week + 312hrs/ minimum of 80% attendance = 249hrs	(NI Min. 60/40 IRE 80/20)

This minimum has and should not prohibit projects from delivering what was originally intended for your contact hours.

The SEUPB and Peace4Youth projects wish to maintain a minimum service and allow young people to continue to engage over this difficult and testing time for all, while recognising the contact has changed significantly. To this end and with effect from the 1st March 2020 the following temporary minimum will be put in place. This minimum should not stop projects delivering from the spirit of your original intended contact hours, it is simply to recognise that the nature of the contact has changed.

Programme	Age profile	Time period	Minimum weekly contact hours	Community Cohort
Programme Minimum	14 - 24 years	Min 6 Months Offered	26 weeks at 6 hours a week + 156hrs/ minimum	(NI Min. 60/40 IRE 80/20)

		of 80% attendance = 125hrs	

Note this is a 50% reduction which is minimum requirement. The programme for young people will remain between 6 to 9 months, depending on the needs of the young person and longer if required.

Projects should be aiming in most instances to deliver 156hrs of contact and the SEUPB will accept participants who have 125hrs or more contact as completers, providing that contact is recorded. Projects are also required to spread activity when possible over 3-4 days per week.

The SEUPB appreciates that for some project participants reasonable adjustments will need to be made, specifically young people with learning difficulties preventing them engaging during this current COVID crisis. Reasonable adjustment by the SEUPB to the requisite contact hours will be considered on a participant by participant basis.

The SEUPB appreciate that not all participants will fit easily into the new requirements depending on the start dates and the SEUPB Programme Officers will be in contact with you. SEUPB will look to establish which of your project participants will be doing the new revised hours, the previous hours and help in establishing which participants fall in between. SEUPB will then give guidance on a case by case basis for the participants that fall in between.

The SEUPB are aware of a number of other key questions and an FAQ specific to Children and Young People Projects is contained within Annex A, see below. Please note that at this time the SEUPB will not be revising the output participant target numbers for projects. However, the Body will be sympathetic to projects ability to deliver against targets in the current climate and this can be reviewed and discussed retrospectively with Programme Officers. The SEUPB acknowledges the position is evolving and does not wish to make further changes at this time.

In relation to the participant incentive payment administered by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland if you have any questions please revert direct to the Department for the Economy team at this time.

If you have any questions on this matters in this memo, please refer them to your Programme Officer in the first instance.

Leanne Massey
Joint Secretariat Director

ANNEX A

FAQ from PEACE4YOUTH Projects	
Q1.	What level of flexibility is the SEUPB prepared to accommodate, to allow the projects to explore and refine the new format of delivery?
A1.	The SEUPB is prepared to consider contact in different formats that can count towards your participant output. Please seek agreement to any proposal on a case by case basis from your Programme Officer.
Q2.	We have participants who before this health crisis, were actively engaged in face – to-face sessions, but now, not all participants are choosing to engage online, will they be discounted even though they were on course to complete sufficient hours had we not been in this pandemic?
A2.	If the participants completed the minimum requirements of engagement (249hrs plus the other elements) they will be considered a completed output. In the main participants engaged prior to 1ˢᵗ March that have completed the majority of the hours will be expected to work towards the original 249hrs. Please approach your Programme Officer to agree any specific case that have recently started and this will be considered on a case by case basis.
Q3.	What hours will be considered as sufficient for current cohort participants to be counted as completers? As delivery has significantly reduced due to situation we are in and sessions are substantially reduced in terms of contact time, as it is just not feasible to have 2-3 hr online sessions with participants. Also, residentials which were planned are no longer taking place, and had they attended a residential, this would have increased their contact hours.
A3.	Projects should be aiming in most instances to deliver 156hrs of contact and the SEUPB will except as a completer is a participant that has 125hrs or more contact and that contact is recorded.
Q4.	Who will be considered as a completer?

A4.	A participant that has 125hrs or more contact hours and that contact is recorded along with meeting the other minimum requirement outlined above.
Q5.	Can deliverables such as residentials be cancelled entirely? We have already got permission to delay residentials but depending on length of lockdown time and social distancing measures after we may not be able to meet these deliverables in Year 3. Until further guidance from government is received, we have delayed asking this question.
A5.	Yes they can. The SEUPB will work with projects as public guidance evolves and changes.
Q6.	A major theme in all the questions that were fed back to me from staff focused on what the SEUPB's thinking is and what their vision is for the programme for the foreseeable future? This includes staff being concerned that their jobs are potentially at risk or that their organisation will face fines for not meeting targets.
A6.	The Peace4Youth Programme is delivering to those most in need and will continue to operate towards achieving the programme outputs.
Q7.	There is a general concern about how we ensure that we are evidencing our work appropriately. Youth work outcomes are notoriously difficult to measure at the best of times. Trust from the funders for those with a previous track record of quality delivery would be most welcomed at this time and reduce stress levels for staff.
A7.	The participants should continue to complete the Queens three phase evaluation. Please retain records of contact as appropriate to allow you to progress.
8Q.	If there is a reduction in expected recruitment targets will this be reflected in a financial penalty or will the project continue to receive the allocated amount of funding regardless if overall targets not met due to current restrictions? Will projects have to make up any under-performance due to the current lockdown once restrictions lifted/by the end of the project i.e. Dec 2021?
A8.	The SEUPB are making temporary reductions to the output requirement and are retaining the output targets. The SEUPB are committed to looking sympathetically at the outcomes for projects in each case providing mitigating action has been taken.
9Q.	Will projects be financially penalised for not reaching targets/contact hours for the year?
A9.	Projects will not be penalised for failing to meet targets due to COVID-19 this year. However, projects should take all action to mitigate the risk and be able to evidence that they have taken action.

Q10.	If a project is currently underspending due to current restrictions (eg employing of additional staff) can this underspend be used in an extension of the project?
A10.	The SEUPB will review extension when projects are within 6 month of ending. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis.
Q11.	The SEUPB have claimed they will not financially penalize programmes as a result of COVID-19 disruptions, although have fallen short of explaining / clarifying what this means. With no clarification, programmes are under immense undue stress.
A11.	The SEUPB have temporarily reduced the output requirements significantly and this should assist projects in meeting the outputs. Projects should take reasonable steps to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and providing this has been undertaken then no action will be taken this year by SEUPB for failure to meet the target.
Q12.	Is Job/pay security confirmed until end of project December 2021?
A12.	The programme is intended to deliver until December 2021 and requires projects to work with the SEUPB to deliver this.
Q13.	Does the commitment of no financial penalties apply to all agencies, including those that didn't meet their targets previously?
A13.	Yes. Providing projects can evidence that they have taken reasonable steps to mitigate the risk no penalty will apply.
Q14.	Flexibility by allowing young people to be engaged with the Programme for more than 9 months to enable us to catch up on any hours missed during this period.
A14.	The SEUPB is content for participants to engage with the programme as long as is required. The participant can only count as one completer.