



TRANSFORM

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

Youth Initiatives Cohorts

Youth Initiatives Derry / Londonderry Cohort

The theme for this month's Transform programme in Derry/Londonderry is 'Welcome Back'. Our weekly sessions have seen the return of face-to-face delivery. As Youth Workers, we could not have been happier for this to happen, the young people shared our enthusiasm and as a result, this month's participation and energy levels have been high. There was lots of learning and fun by all. We spent time connecting and rebuilding our relationships outside of Zoom calls, competitions, and doorstep visits. We recognise that the group dynamics have changed due to meeting together physically but the general consensus is that it is a better experience being together.

The theme for this years Mental Health Awareness is Nature and this could not be more relevant to our current Transform cohort as



getting outside has been an important element of the programme. We have participated in regular weekly walks and have been facilitating lots of our OCN sessions outside reminding our young people of the amazing, shared spaces that we have in our City. The young people have bonded over sharing together their highs and lows of lockdown, it has been a significant connecting factor as it is something that they have all experienced and struggled with.



Our weekly sessions have involved painting canvases, making dried flower pictures, playing a wide range of fun games and activities, and creating spaces for meaningful dialogue. We are currently making plans with our young people for our summer programme which will involve them volunteering and the excitement is building. At the beginning of the month, we facilitated a scavenger hunt on the walls within our city were the young people had to find the answers to our quiz on the walls as well as take part in a range of the challenges facilitated by our Youth Workers. The feedback was positive and young people learnt about our City and the history and culture of the City. We are looking forward to the remainder of the project and are excited for the learning that is to be gained and experiences that we will share, particularly over the summer period which is always action packed.

Caoimhe, John & Elaine

Youth Initiatives Lisburn / West Belfast Cohort

This month we were able to welcome our groups back into our centres after a few months of online and outreach work. Whilst it was great to keep in touch with our participants by various means, there's nothing like face to face meetings and the opportunity to meet new people, go new places and try new things!

The young people have been so enthusiastic, meeting regularly throughout the weeks with the focus on getting back together with various fun and relational activities. We commenced with a Life Skills programme, were young people had an opportunity to look at the important choices they are faced with regularly, as well as the risks and harms associated with drugs, alcohol, gambling and other things they may be exposed to. It was also a great chance for them to look outside of the here and now, and to hope and aspire to achieve something bigger in the future!

The relaxing of restrictions also meant opportunities for trips! Our first trip involved going to the local Spruce Meadows activity farm, were participants participated in quad biking, archery and foot-golf on a sunny spring evening. It really was the best way to



recommence face to face sessions, meeting in person and get a real sense of what the Transform programme is all about. Next the groups went to Prison Island and attempted a number of puzzles and escape rooms. It was a brilliant experience! Over the next few months we are planning more fun activities were our groups will try new things and go to new places, creating shared experiences that we hope will last a lifetime and open up the possibility of a new future they may not have even considered could exist! There will be a July summer programme were they will travel to Ganaway and engage with our cross-community camp programme and then in August will take the lead by joining the team at our Summer Scheme and helping make our summer programme the most exciting it can be! Looking forward to updating you on how it all went later in the year!

Ryan & Ben



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
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