**Local Groups Celebrate PEACE IV Funding Success**

Twelve local community groups are celebrating their share of a recent award of £394,255 under Derry City and Strabane District Council’s local PEACE IV programme. The PEACE IV Programme is supported by the European Union, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Gearoid Ó hEára, chair of the PEACE IV Board said: “The funding will benefit a wide range of ages and geographical areas of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Area and immediate cross-border hinterland for the delivery of cross-community reconciliation focused programmes.”

Among the rural groups who benefitted from the programme were, the Aghyaran Development Association who netted £24,760 for a ‘Cross Community Cross Border Youth Programme’ for thirty 16-24 year olds living in the Glenderg and Gleneely area. The Churchtown Community Association’s ‘One Town’ project received £25,000 for a history and reconciliation cross-community programme in Castlederg for adults over 45, while RAPID (Rural Area Partnership Derry) secured £24,950 for delivering their ‘Connecting Rural Communities’ history and cultural diversity project for older people in Faughan and Sperrin. Adults from across the entire council area can opt to participate in the Churches Trust £25,224 ‘Celebrating Commonality: Celebrating Difference’ project focused on faith and diversity.

Alderman Drew Thompson, co-chair of the PEACE IV Board said: “The Board were pleased that local community groups were prepared to take on potentially difficult issues in their project applications. All projects had to include not just sustained cross-community work but also a strong degree of focus on peace and reconciliation. Many of the funded applications are collaborative projects where a range of groups from different identities or areas are working together on delivery.”

Three local groups will be taking on the contentious issue of paramilitary related assaults via creative arts and community educational and dialogue projects. They include the Creggan Neighbourhood Partnership’s ‘Changing Perceptions’ £19,776 project that will undertake a one year programme to research and develop community educational materials to tackle the issue. While the Greater Shantallow Community Arts emotively titled ‘Don't Shoot My Wane, Shoot Me!’ will use its £49,991 for a creative arts performance based project to bring unique insight to the issue and stimulate debate and the Rosemount Resource Centre have received funding of £49,870 for their ‘Time2Choose’ youth project exploring the issue with 60 young people through teambuilding, discussions, seminars, day events, talks and residentials.

Youth projects were popular amongst applications. Steelstown (Brian Og’s) GAC secured £49,340 for their cross-community/cross-border multi-sports ‘Integrate Sport Initiative’ for 180 6-14 year olds. The ‘Uniting Community Cohesion’ project earned £19,111 for Clooney Estate Residents Association’s teenagers project exploring history and shared social issues in partnership with Shantallow. A PEACE IV project for the Playhouse will use £30,000 to engage12-14 year olds from Enagh / Strathfoyle, Drumahoe, Ballymagroarty and Raphoe areas in a community relations and creative arts project; whilst Galliagh and the wider city will benefit from the Rainbow Child and Family Centre’s securing of £26,233 for a cross-community project building trust, develop relationships and breaking down barriers through workshops, trips and residentials. A £50,000 Council wide ‘T.A.S.K Project’ by REACH Across will recruit 90 young people (14-17yrs) and deliver a range of activities, courses and events to tackle prejudice and promote cross-community contact.

The funded projects all came together for a training and networking morning in St.Columb’s Park House on 30th January. At the event the Mayor and PEACE IV Board also gave formal recognition to Mr Conal McFeely of Creggan Enterprises for his valued participation and input into the local PEACE IV Board for over a twenty years. Speaking at the event, Catherine Cooke, chair of the PEACE IV Building Positive Relations steering group said: “It has been a pleasure to have worked with Conal on the current and previous PEACE IV Boards. The wisdom and knowledge he has contributed over the years have been highly valued. The Board felt it was not only appropriate but significantly important to note his input into local peace and reconciliation work over such as sustained length of time.”

Anyone who wishes to find out about opportunities to participate in the local PEACE IV programme can sign up for monthly e-newsletters on [www.derrystrabane.com/Peace-IV](http://www.derrystrabane.com/Peace-IV)

**Further information**

* The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.
* It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.
* The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
* The PEACE IV Programme has a value of €270 million and aims to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.
* For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu