



Pictured (l-r) David Babington, Chief Executive of Action Mental Health; Junior Minister Declan Kearney, NI Executive; Interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland Professor Siobhan O'Neill; Gina McIntyre, Chief Executive of the SEUPB; Carol Scullion, Project Manager – OUR Generation, Action Mental Health; and Rosaline Keenan, Senior Manager Service Reform (Progressing Mental Health Services) at the HSE, Ireland. Picture: Michael Cooper

Project Launch

OUR Generation marked its official launch on 24th September 2020 through a unique virtual event when our objective, – Growing Up Better, Together – was unveiled.

Speakers for the launch included Junior Minister Gordon Lyons and Junior Minister Declan Kearney, Gina McIntyre (C.E.O SEUPB), David Babington (C.E.O Action Mental Health), Rosaline Keenan (Senior Manager Service Reform) and Siobhan O'Neill (Interim Mental Health Champion for NI).

Audience members were able to watch a live online event streamed from Youth Action's Rainbow Factory Studio hosted by Cool FM's Curtis McCosh, which featured a special video of children and young people performing The Who's 'My Generation'.

Speaking at the launch, Siobhan O'Neill, Interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland said: "I'm delighted to have contributed to the design of this ground-breaking project integrating peacebuilding and emotional wellbeing. Our team at Ulster University are overseeing the delivery of a suite of trauma-informed resilience programmes, to reduce the risk of mental illness later in life. Our vision is that the next generation will be strong resilient and empathic, and in a position to deliver a better Northern Ireland".

For more info visit: <https://ourgenerationlaunchevent.com>



 more pics inside!

Our vision is that the next generation will be strong, resilient and empathic, and in a position to deliver a better Northern Ireland".

- Siobhan O'Neill



WELCOME to the OUR Generation newsletter...



I am sure we can all agree that 2020 has been a challenging year, in ways that none of us foresaw. We have all felt the impact of the pandemic on our personal lives and on the local economy.

Its impact on the mental health of everyone, not least our children and young people, is also widely recognised. This comes on top of a global rise in poor mental health, and the specific effects of our own violent history, which continue to ripple from one generation to the next. OUR Generation is about breaking this cycle by supporting children and young people to develop skills, confidence and resilience which will improve their well-being and their capacity to become agents of change, building peace in their communities.

We do not act alone in this, but work with community partners to complement and build on the wealth of local expertise and initiatives which are already in place. We aim to leave a legacy through skills and resources which will continue to be of benefit for years to come. So, where are we now?

COVID-19 hit just as OUR Generation was getting started and this had an inevitable effect on all aspects of project planning and delivery, not least staff recruitment and the postponement of our official launch, but we have adapted and we will continue to do so.

Our launch took place on 24th September, and was a huge success. Co-operation Ireland completed an extensive community scoping exercise across the 5 Urban Village areas and the Border Region of Ireland, to identify current provision and unmet needs. This was a substantial and invaluable piece of work and I would like to thank our partner, Co-Operation Ireland, for completing this.

The completion of the Community Scoping and the launch mark the start of the next phase and we are now "all systems go" with programme promotion and delivery. Some delivery has already taken place with a number of schools and community groups, through face-to-face and some digital delivery, and we are delighted to report a steady stream of enquiries and bookings. So, please, if you would like to hear more, do get in touch.

- Carol Scullion **Project Manager**

Growing up better, together *The story of our strapline....*



The original strapline attached to the OUR Generation project was 'Building peace through emotional resilience'. However, we endeavoured to find one that was more relevant to children and young people – after all that is who the project is aimed at!

After lots of consideration about the best ways to address this, emails were sent out to partners of the project and thanks to Co-Operation Ireland and the Urban Village Initiative, these were also sent out to potential youth organisations and schools that OUR Generation would be working with.

The email contained a link to a survey through which 235 children and young people were consulted – with 24 straplines suggested.

A focus group was then put together which contained children and young people from both sides of the border and different communities between the ages 12-22, along with communications staff from funder SEUPB, Urban Village Initiative and OUR Generation. They narrowed the suggestions down to 8 straplines and then a vote was cast to pick the winner - which was chosen because it used language which was known by children and young people and because it represented mental health, wellbeing and peace – which are all key themes of the project.



Members of Keady Young mens group who were involved in the strapline panel

TAKE SURVEY



About us...

OUR Generation - The Project

The Our Generation project provides a unique opportunity for communities, North and South of the Border, to work together to halt the intergenerational impact of trauma and to build emotional resilience and peace for generations to come.

This three-year project will run to December 2022 and engage with 36,000 children, young people and their key contacts. The project will be delivered in education, youth and community settings across the 5 Urban Village Areas of Northern Ireland and the Border Region Area of Ireland.

The cross border partnership of 7 regional organisations will be led by Action Mental Health in partnership with of Donegal Youth Service, Co-Operation Ireland, Youth Action NI, Youth Work Ireland, PlayBoard NI & Ulster University.

Funding for the Our Generation project has been awarded through the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), match-funding for the project has been provided by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

OUR Generation will collaborate with existing community-based initiatives to offer accessible, age appropriate prevention, early intervention and recovery activities delivered on a cross-border and cross-community basis to support the mental and emotional well-being of children and young people. Children and young people will engage in programme design and delivery, including provision of peer support, developing skills and confidence to improve well-being within their communities and act as agents of change, building peace for future generations.

OUR Generation - The Legacy

4,900 key contacts of Children & Young People will be equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence to support the emotional resilience and wellbeing of Children and Young People including an improved understanding of mental health problems.

31,100 Children & Young People will have improved emotional resilience, empathy and skills to help themselves & others; greater intercultural awareness, community cohesion; the capacity & desire to be active citizens in their communities.

Children and Young People and their key contacts will have co-designed a range of digital resources including a social media app, animations & podcasts to support their own needs and those of the wider communities on a regional & national basis.

Emotional Recovery Colleges will be accessible in communities for all Children and Young People & their wider communities to engage on a cross community basis & access support for mental/emotional resilience.



7 x Regional
Organisations



36,000
children, young
people & key
contacts



Delivered in
education, youth &
community settings

Who's who in OUR Generation?



You might remember some of these faces from our launch video...
Keep an eye out as we'll be featuring more staff in the next issue and
on social media!



Katherine Dunlop:
PlayBoard NI
Service Delivery &
Development Manager:

"I am passionate about supporting communities to build a better future for our children, and I strongly believe that the OUR Generation project can make a positive change in the approach and integration of equality and diversity to ensure the children and young people of Northern Ireland can grow up better, together."



Michael McKenna
Youth Action
Project Lead, Work with Young
Men

"We work with young people aged 10-25 to help them reach their own potential. We're going to be delivering our LifeMaps, which is a mental fitness model of practice, to help young people and adults gain the techniques to help them cope with everyday life."



Colm Fanning
Co-Operation Ireland
Design & Development Officer:

"I'm involved in this programme because I have a real passion to see young people grow and young people's attitudes change towards people from different communities that they may never have met before."



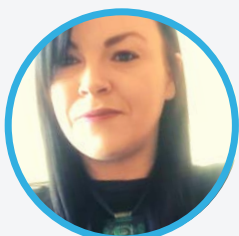
Laura Euler
Action Mental Health
Service Manager

"I joined the team in May, when I heard about the aims of the project I was just so delighted to be given the opportunity to be involved in something that I wholeheartedly believe will have such a positive impact on the place where we live."



Tracey McArdle:
Youth Work Ireland
Project Co-Ordinator

"Our vision is a world of possibilities for all young people. We're delivering programmes to young people aged 14-24, in counties Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim. These are BeWell, an emotional resilience programme, the YES project - an empowering sexual health programme, and the social action project which supports young people to take an active leading role in their communities; building skills in leadership and teamwork."



Dr Tara O'Neill
Ulster University
Research Associate

"UU will lead on the research of evidence based programmes, overseeing the development, engaging children and young people in programme design and delivery including peer support, developing skills and confidence to improve well-being within the communities and act as agents of change, building peace for future generations."



Frankie McGreevy
Donegal Youth Service
Our Generation Manager

"I'm responsible for delivery in Donegal, Sligo/Leitrim and Cavan/Monaghan. I'm really looking forward to getting involved with this project, getting on the ground and helping young people build their emotional resilience so that will help them reach out to others, and in the long run help the peace process."



Laura Doherty
Donegal Youth Service
OUR Generation
Youth Worker

"I will be delivering throughout the areas of Donegal, working with young people aged 5 - 25. I will also be delivering workshops to parents and carers and teachers as well. As part of building peer mentoring capacity, we will be delivering our Coach Companion programme, which will be for people who want to make a difference in their community, for people who have an interest in helping others, and also for people who like to express their thoughts and opinions."

OUR Generation begins delivery in local schools

September is the time for going back to school, and our project workers were no exception! They began delivery of our 'Healthy Me' programme at Mercy Primary School in North Belfast, delivering sessions to teachers and pupils.

The children also took part in a naming survey for the "Healthy Me" characters, which were recently redesigned. You may also have spotted Mercy PS in our launch event video where they made a cameo appearance to promote our strapline: "Growing Up Better Together". They were fabulous on their big screen debut!

If your school would like to get involved in OUR Generation, contact: laura.euler@amh.org.uk



healthy
me

Introducing....



George



Molly



Tom



Sam



Jo



Olivia

Community scoping studies



OUR Generation project partner Co-operation Ireland recently completed a number of key reports - looking at the local communities where we will be delivering.

Claire Heaney McKee and the Co-Operation Ireland team have been working with The Executive Office to carry out research in Urban Village areas which includes north Belfast, east Belfast, west Belfast, south Belfast and Derry/Londonderry.

Claire also acknowledged the support of CYPSC (Children's & Young People's Services) co-ordinators for their help with scoping in the Republic of Ireland on a report into counties Cavan/Monaghan, Sligo/Leitrim and Donegal.

Together they have completed 118 interviews, with additional feedback gained from an online questionnaire - culminating in the production of 6 separate reports. Claire described it as being crucial to ensuring OUR Generation is a success.

She said: "Relationship building has been an important aspect, as this exercise has opened the door to discussion, trust building, laying foundations for communication between partners and local delivery agents."



co-operationireland
working for a future together



Going for Gold

OUR Generation's very own mental health Champion leads the way...



Siobhan pictured speaking at the OUR Generation launch event



Back in June 2020, Prof Siobhan O'Neill became Interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland, an appointment confirmed by Health Minister Robin Swann.

Siobhan heads up Ulster University's academic team who are ensuring OUR Generation deliver a suite of 'gold standard' programmes to local communities.

Given the rise in mental health concerns amidst the ongoing pandemic, and given Prof O'Neill's position on this project, this was a timely appointment and something of a coup for OUR Generation.

It means OUR Generation will benefit from Prof O'Neill's knowledge and expertise as one of NI's leading experts in the field of mental health. She has already delivered a training webinar to project staff on 'Childhood Adversities in NI and Introduction to Trauma Informed Practice'.

Siobhan said: "Through the OUR Generation programme we will lead a shift in how we view and understand wellbeing and behaviour. We want people across NI to understand that difficult behaviours are a result of what has "HAPPENED TO" us, rather than things that are "WRONG" with us. We want to empower young people to manage the most complex, important and amazing part of their body, their brain."



What does a Mental Health Champion do?



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Acts as a public advocate for mental health – participating in public debate



Encourages government to think about mental well-being, resilience & recovery in policy making



Supports research into mental health

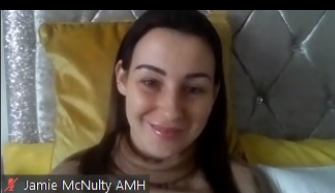


Challenges decisions where mental health is not considered

World Mental Health Day



The OUR Generation team from Action Mental Health got together to mark World Mental Health day with a 'Cuppa and Catch up' over Zoom. What a great idea - something as simple as a brew with friends or colleagues can help toward self care and mental well-being. So what are you waiting for? Get that kettle on!



Rosie Maguire, OUR Generation project worker based in Fermanagh, also took part in this year's 'Abseil Belfast Castle' event on Sunday 4th Oct, to raise money for Action Mental Health - a brave venture for a good cause; well done Rosie!

Partner Roundup

All of our partners have been busy this period, but here are a selection of highlights...

Co-operation Ireland held the first Project Reference Group (PRG) meeting on Wed 11th Nov 2020. The PRG is an advisory panel of strategic stakeholders who will meet quarterly, to advise and assist programme development and delivery. 25 members attended, representing key stakeholders from the community/voluntary and statutory sector as well as an International element. This was a very positive first meeting providing members with an overview of the OUR Generation Project, Community Scoping Findings and next steps. There were lots of lively discussions, much enthusiasm and excitement about the OG Project given the huge need across the areas involved. Co-operation Ireland has also begun hosting online knowledge sharing events - the first of which happened on 25th Nov (pictured). These meetings are specifically aimed at organisations representing minority groups within the 5 Urban Village areas in Northern Ireland including BME, LGBTQ+ and Women's Groups.



How common is stress in young people?

Anxiety/Stress is relatively common, the recent Youth and Well-being Study in NI found that Anxiety and Depression is 25% more common in children and young people in Northern Ireland compared to other parts of the UK...

- 1 in every 8 children & young people experience anxiety and depression
- 1 in 20 young people in NI aged between 11 and 19 display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or complex PTSD.



#stressawarenessweek



The team at UU have been very busy in the last few months completing a rapid review of the literature in the area of peace building, resilience and trauma informed care to inform the initial evaluations of the project programmes. They have been working on developing the monitoring and evaluation framework for the project, as well as a training schedule for partners. They are also currently preparing to complete the Quality Assurance report for the 1st year of delivery. Additionally, Dr Tara O'Neill provided research for the OUR Generation team around stress awareness which we were able to share and circulate across our social media channels throughout the Stress Awareness Week which ran from 9th - 13th November.



Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work Ireland - the team have been delivering 'Be Well' workshops and are introducing a new social action project to the local communities in Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal. This will be a 6-month personal development programme for young people aged between 14-25 who will be the guardians of a €1000 grant. Young people will identify areas of local development and positive change needed within their communities and will advertise for local groups to apply for funding for this pot of money to support these improvements. They are also offering free online YES facilitator training to those working with young people - to deliver workshops on relationships and sexual health.

For more information please contact: ourgeneration@youthworkireland.ie

Donegal Youth Service - the team have just finished delivering Peer Mentoring to a group of Transition Years students from the Royal & Prior School in Raphoe, County Donegal which went really well. They are also currently working with a group of Transition Years students in Buncrana on the same programme.



YES Project
Youth Empowerment in SRE



European-wide initiative to support youth workers and practitioners to educate young people around issues of sexual health.

PlayBoard NI

The team have been busy behind the scenes making contact with some fantastic settings within the Urban Village Areas and we would like to thank these settings for their time and enthusiasm for the Spaces to Be programme.

PlayBoard endeavour to make the programme as beneficial and user friendly as possible and have therefore developed the programme to be compatible for online delivery to facilitate the Parent's and Practitioner elements. PlayBoard have ensured that Covid-19 restrictions are supported and that our activities remain fun and playful for all who take part. We are excited to say that we are working with interested settings to get our first programme up and running, which will be delivered in East Belfast within the coming weeks.

If you would like more information on the Spaces to Be programme, please contact Roberta Johnson at 02890 883088 or roberta.johnson@playboard.co.uk



KATHERINE LINDSAY
DUNLOP

Service Delivery &
Development Coordinator



AIDAN BURNS

Play Participation Officer



BERNADETTE MCCANN

Play Participation Officer



LAURA PERRY

Play Participation Officer



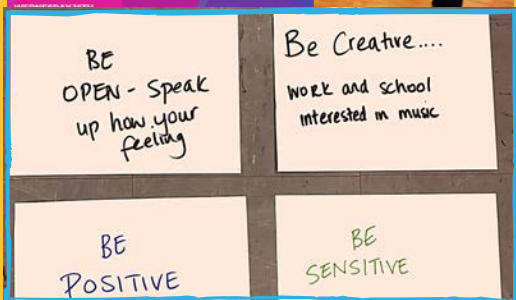
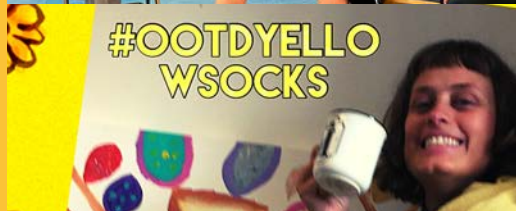
ROBERTA JOHNSON

Play Participation Officer



CIRA PALLI-ASPERO

Administrator



YouthAction
NORTHERN IRELAND

- Keady Young Men's Group marked #internationalmensday by creating 'Be' statements to build their mental fitness
- Staff members participated in Agenda for Peace Training on 22nd October & are now preparing to roll the training out into communities.
- A number of events were delivered during Good Relations Week from 14th – 21st September 2020. These were all very well attended & have sparked ideas for projects within local communities.
- Young Women's Development Worker Annette took to social media to promote the #LonelyNotAlone campaign to reduce youth loneliness. She dressed in yellow in solidarity with young people.
- YANI have also been delivering the OCNNI Level 2 Certificate in Youth Work Practice using LifeMaps & peacebuilding.
- A number of mental health champions have been identified across YouthAction's regional offices, one being Mary Jo Reid who is the Training Worker on the OUR Generation Project. They held their first meeting in the week leading up to World Mental Health Day & Mary Jo quickly organised a yoga session in partnership Shanti Yoga & Well Being.

For more information on YouthAction Northern Ireland's Project contact: Michael McKenna: michael@youthaction.org

action mental health

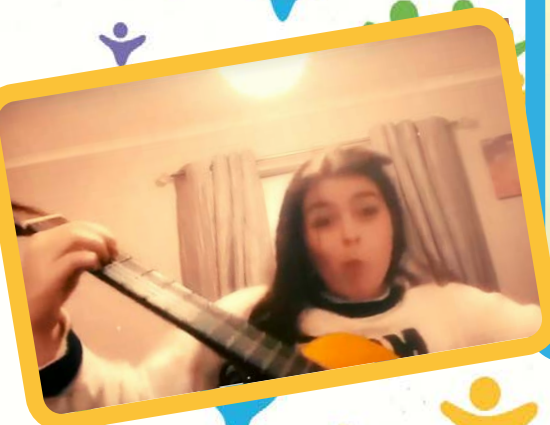
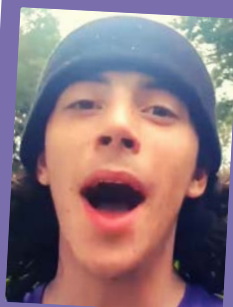
The AMH OUR Generation Team have been busy fine tuning programmes and reaching out to the community to raise awareness of the project. They have started to deliver 'Healthy Me' and 'Provoking Thought' in our schools. Teachers and pupils in both South and North Urban Village areas, and in Strabane have already started to benefit from the programmes. They are also engaging in the pilot of our new Healthy Me programme developed specifically for 5-8 year olds. The team continues to work closely with our partners across the border, Donegal Youth Service, as we roll out our programmes simultaneously!



OUR Generation launch continued...



The stars of our launch event!





Peace



Northern Ireland - Ireland

European Regional Development Fund



Northern Ireland Executive

www.northernireland.gov.uk



Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland



Donegal
Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland



YouthAction

NORTHERN IRELAND



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For communications queries please contact: cjones@amh.org.uk



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