

Peace & Reconciliation Workshop

During the activity residential weekend at the Donegal Activity Centre in Bundoran over the weekend of 15th to 17th February 40 young people from the project took part in a lively workshop on Peace and Reconciliation, facilitated by John Guthrie.

During the workshop we considered how our perceptions and beliefs impact on how we think and the effect this can have on our decisions, opinions and actions.

John demonstrated with the use of an uncritical Inference test and various perception diagrams how we are all subjective in our selection of data and experiences when making decisions, forming opinions and taking action.

He also explained how being aware of how we make decisions and form opinions can be an effective check on a fair and considered outcome.

It was a lively and informative session, with everyone enthusiastically taking part.

Evaluation and Planning Workshop

Also during the activity residential weekend at the Donegal Activity Centre in Bundoran, John Guthrie conducted an Evaluation and Planning Workshop with the youth from the project.

During the session; the courses, activities, residential s and trips of the last two years were reviewed and the young people were asked to contribute to future planning. It was a meaningful exercise and a sizeable aspirational list was generated.

This can be summarised as follows:

Employment

Job Club 90%, CV preparation 100%, Employment based training (ECDL, Computerised Accounts, Safe Pass, etc.) 100% and assistance with job search and interview techniques 95%.

Activities-Centre based

Youth Club 100%, Drop in Centre 95%, Computer/broadband internet access 100%, First Aid 60%, Dancing/Disco's/Hip hop 100%, Fashion show 100%

Activities/Sport-External

Gaisce Awards, RYA I&II Power boating 50%, RYA I&II Sailing 60%, Windsurfing 75%, GNAS Canoeing 75%, Cross border/cross community football competition 50%, Basketball 30%, Cliff jumping 70%, Banana boating 60%, Shopping trips 60%, Lazor force 55%, Paint balling 60%, Water trampolining 100%, Bungy jumping 75%.

Residentials/Exchanges/Trips

Bigger variety of locations for residential 80%, Bi&tri-lateral exchanges 65%, IFI North American employment exchanges 55%. Trips to Historical sites, i.e.: Long Kesh, Mountjoy, Stormont, Dial, etc. 60%, Trips for bowling, Ice skating, W5, Armagh Observatory, Dublin Zoo, Dublin/Belfast museum.

Planning

It was decided that these results would be considered by the project and youth committees when planning the next phase of the project.

Youth Committee meets in Kilmore Hotel, Cavan

At a lively and well attended meeting of the project youth committee on the evening of Wednesday 5th March 2008, 10 members of Cavanaleck, Enniskillen and Teach Oscail, Tullacmongan, Cavan committees met together with 15 young representatives of the project to consider future funding options for the project and undertake an evaluation and planning session.

Facilitated by John Guthrie, the meeting considered funding options and possibilities. John emphasised that funding at current levels under the programme for Peace and Reconciliation was highly unlikely and he stressed that other options must be considered. He stated that to realise the aspirations and requirements of the project that a comprehensive financial projection be completed and that various funds be approached to support individual elements of the overall costs. It was pointed out that staff costs would be the most difficult aspect of the project to obtain funding for.

The meeting indicated that staff was essential to deliver such a wide and varied programme of education, activities and support and John indicated who could be approached to support these costs.

The meeting approved a programme of education, activities and support and it was agreed that a project budget be developed to support this programme. John stated he would work with the staff and committee to identify funding options to support this budget.

The meeting also considered computer and broadband internet access with the young people indicating their desire to have much more access to facilitate homework, internet access and practice. They pointed out the low broadband availability in the homes in both locations. The meeting considered how to provide substantially more access, especially with the need to supervise these activities. The young people of the committee indicated that they would be prepared to assist in the supervision of this and the meeting agreed that they would look at this urgently.

Following this decision and an indication by the young people that they would welcome more opportunities for volunteering, the meeting decided to provide this and to urgently seek training for volunteers.

John congratulated the meeting for being so constructive and well attended.