

70  
*YouthAction*  
NORTHERN IRELAND  
YEARS

# 2013-2017

## Strategic Plan

Inspiring young people.  
Tackling inequalities.  
Investing in communities.

Charity number. XR44398  
Company number. NI035317



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



# Foreword

On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, members and young people, I am pleased to present our strategic plan for the next 5 years. We do this in the context of a difficult economic climate, with disproportionately high youth unemployment; where the impact of the new Welfare Reform Act is yet to be assessed; and during a restructuring of public administration.

We are ambitious to tackle some of the issues most critical to young people in Northern Ireland and, with others, contribute to a flourishing population in a stable society. Throughout this plan we are striving to improve the life chances of young people, close the performance gap and involve young people in a shared future for Northern Ireland.

This 5 year plan focuses on the outcomes we seek to achieve for young people. The associated actions are presented as locally based, youth work actions and strategic actions, working collaboratively to lobby and advocate with and on behalf of young people.

We will be celebrating 70 successful years of our organisation in 2014 and I am looking forward to reporting back in 2017, on the impact we make.

**Dr Ann Marie Gray**

Chairperson ~ YouthAction Northern Ireland  
2013

## Our vision:

young people are happy, healthy and hopeful.

## Our mission:

YouthAction Northern Ireland is a membership based, regional, youth organisation, with a 70 year history of working with young people to tackle inequalities in their lives, improve their life chances and contribute to flourishing communities in a peaceful, shared society.

# Our values:

- **The potential of young people** – we strive to develop young people’s capacity to improve the quality of their own lives and to affect change in their communities.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – we seek to respect the rights and responsibilities of each individual, and to proactively challenge inequalities that exist within society.
- **Peace building** – we want to contribute to a society which is shared, peaceful, stable and fair; in which communities live in peace with each other; and in which there is no place for violence.
- **Volunteering** – we promote voluntary commitment as an integral and vital contribution economic and civil society.
- **Participative democracy** – we actively encourage the involvement of young people in civic engagement, recognising active democracy as a way of life.
- **Building Leadership** – we inspire leadership qualities and skills in young people.

# Strategic goals

## for 2013 – 2017

- Raise 1.8 million pounds per year to achieve our outcomes.
- Invest in 1500 local communities to support youth work.
- Improve the life chances of 60,000 young people aged 10 – 25 years by increasing their well being, aspirations and opportunities.
- Increase the skills, qualifications and employability of 5000 young leaders.
- Challenge Government to listen to young people

# Outcomes for young people

## *Young people will:*

- Increase their volunteering and leadership skills.
- Build resilience.
- Increase their creative expression.
- Increase their economic activity.
- Increase their contribution to peace building.
- Reduce inequalities.
- Increase their advocacy and political engagement activities.
- Be more active in communities.

# Strategic plan 2013 - 2017

<i>Outcomes for young people</i>	<i>Youth work actions</i>	<i>Strategic actions</i>
<p><b><i>Increase volunteering and leadership</i></b></p>	<p>Embed the value and spirit of volunteering within YouthAction NI through youth volunteering, participation and youth governance opportunities.</p> <p>Offer volunteering opportunities, in which young people develop transferrable experiences and skills for life and work.</p> <p>Utilise Youth Achievement Awards and the Millennium Volunteers programme to recognise and accredit young volunteers.</p> <p>Deliver a range of leadership, accredited training (levels 1 – 4) in youth work, community relations and equity, diversity and interdependence.</p>	<p>Promote volunteering as a vital contribution to society; as a tool for the social, economic, and educational development of young people; and as an important contribution to the non-formal education workforce.</p> <p>Become a recognised partner of the University of Ulster (with YMCA) to contribute to the training, growth and development of the Community Youth Work courses.</p> <p>Raise quality standards within youth work, by contributing our quality assurance systems, recognised awarding centre status and training expertise.</p>
<p><b><i>Build resilience</i></b></p>	<p>Deliver positive mental programmes to young people in communities.</p> <p>Support young people to identify flourishing behaviours which improve their mental health and well being.</p> <p>Support young people to be hopeful and optimistic, and to identify meaning, purpose and accomplishment within their lives.</p> <p>Support disadvantaged young people to regain a sense of purpose and self worth in making a transition into employment, training or education.</p> <p>Support young people to develop coping strategies and sources of support to help reduce barriers to learning and development.</p>	<p>Inspire dialogue and sharing across health, education, employment and arts sectors to enhance flourishing young people, communities and society.</p> <p>Produce and widely disseminate, a model of practice developed in partnership with the health sector on how youth work interventions improves young people's mental health and well being.</p> <p>Collaborate with the health and arts sectors to inform how youth arts can contribute to the well being of young people</p>

<p><b><i>Increase creative expression</i></b></p>	<p>Support young people's artistic development through our creative arts &amp; learning hub at College Square North.</p> <p>Support young people's creative expression through performing arts classes, productions, showcase events, conferences, seminars and training.</p> <p>Initiate community outreach initiatives which incorporates youth arts as a mechanism for both artistic, political and creative expression.</p> <p>Invest long term in young people through leadership opportunities, peer education, work placements and tutoring to aid pathways into the performing arts and related industries.</p>	<p>Investigate, produce and disseminate a model of participatory youth arts, underpinned by youth work principles throughout the youth and arts sectors.</p> <p>Promote the development of a network of youth arts organisations to share resources and learning.</p> <p>College Square North recognised as an artistic and political, youth led hub.</p>
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<p><b><i>Increase economic activity</i></b></p>	<p>Employ and train young adults as youth work apprentices through the Level 3 Apprenticeship in Youth Work.</p> <p>Deliver a range of employability programmes to young people aged 16-25, who remain outside of education, employment and training to close the performance gap between young people.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the private sector to enhance employability and economic activity and opportunities among young people.</p> <p>Encourage entrepreneurial attitudes and actions in young adults</p>	<p>Inform the Department for Employment's NEETS Strategy Forum, of effective responses to meeting the needs of young people who are NEET.</p> <p>Embed the Apprenticeship in Youth Work within the Workforce Development Strategy for the youth work sector and contribute to the non formal education workforce.</p> <p>Produce practice and policy briefs to inform government of the impact of employability programmes underpinned by youth work.</p>
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<i>Outcomes for young people</i>	<i>Youth work actions</i>	<i>Strategic actions</i>
<p><b>Increase contribution to peace-building</b></p>	<p>Support young people to grow and learn with others from different communities, backgrounds and identities.</p> <p>Support young people in communities as peace ambassadors and champions for change.</p> <p>Young people, as active and equal partners to inform peace-related research to shape a peace youth manifesto.</p> <p>Increase European exchange programmes and partnerships .</p>	<p>Contribute to 'Sharing in Education' programmes and the Community Relations Equality and Diversity in Education initiative.</p> <p>Train youth and community workers at levels 2- 4 in Equity, Diversity and Interdependence.</p> <p>Sustain North / South/ East /West agreements to enhance opportunities for young people across the isles.</p>
<p><b>Reduce inequalities</b></p>	<p>Reach out to young people who are experiencing poverty, social exclusion and inequality.</p> <p>Awaken the conscience of young people to be sensitive to oppression and discrimination, while upholding the values of equality and diversity.</p> <p>Support young women and men to reflect and act on the challenges, prejudices, and expectations that they face in order to create positive alternatives and opportunities</p> <p>Increase young people's capacity to change and improve their lives through new experiences, skills and qualifications.</p>	<p>Work with strategic partners to reduce inequalities for young people and challenge structures and practices that maintain inequalities.</p> <p>Undertake representational roles on strategic bodies, policy forums and advisory groups across government and lobbyist groups to inform and shape services for young people.</p> <p>Speak out publicly on issues most pertinent to young people, drawing evidence from our youth work and research.</p>



***Increase advocacy and political engagement***

Inspire young people to be actively interested in politics, be registered and motivated to vote.

Work with young people to engage with their political representatives through innovative methods such as Let's Talk dialogue days and youth campaigning.

Complete research to improve effective policy making for and with young people.

Work collaboratively with others to enhance youth participation including dialogue, political engagement and democracy with Government and policy makers.

Challenge, lobby and advocate on young people's behalf to improve support and services available to them.

Inspire the voluntary youth sector to collectively improve participative and political engagement practices to bridge the gap between youth voices and government.

***Be active in communities***

Work with young people in local communities to effectively assess need and to be co-creators of plans to address these needs.

Deliver effective, flexible and tailored youth work programmes to young people in their community, utilising thematic, local and global themes.

Connect young leaders in local communities to local and regional developments.

Support area based youth work partnerships to be fully inclusive of young people in local area and regional planning.

Deliver child protection training and vetting for local groups across NI.

Enhance services to youth, community and arts groups in our network across Northern Ireland.

Contribute to local area plans through a progressive model of support, bringing resources, expertise and models of practice.

Implement and support full community approaches in which young people and adults work together on a shared vision and actions.

Enhance the regional and local role of YouthAction NI in connecting to communities through our 7 learning and support hubs.

Contribute our expertise, thematic areas of work and quality assurance systems to a Regional Youth Development Plan.

# Organisational ■ goals:

- **Ensure** YouthAction Northern Ireland operates to the highest governance standards, within a clear constitutional and legal framework.
- **Strive** for a sustainable and robust financial base for the work of the organisation.
- **Inspire** leadership, learning and growth in staff and volunteers to maximise their contribution to the organisation and society.

# Principles underpinning our work

- **Evidence based practice** – youth work is based upon research and evaluation.
- **Community development** – community owned solutions which support the full inclusion of young people in the social and economic life of communities.
- **Partnership** – local and strategic partnerships best meet the needs of young people.
- **Voluntary relationships** – young people will more readily participate in voluntary processes.
- **Young people led** – young people are more likely to engage in initiatives of which they feel real ownership.
- **Innovation and creativity** – to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of young people, we strive to be responsive, flexible, creative and pioneering.

# Our youth work



# priorities:

**Equality work with young women** – encourages young women to value themselves, develop their abilities and helps them to understand and challenge the prejudice and inequalities they may encounter in their lives.

**Youth arts** – offers young people of all abilities, opportunities to develop their performance and artistic potential, as well as their social and educational skills, through the medium of performing and allied arts.

**Work with young men** – develops, implements and supports strategies for approaches to work with young men, in which young men can learn and develop alternatives to the outdated and restrictive roles of masculinity.

**Training** – formally recognises and accredits young people's participation in and contribution to youth work within communities and creates pathways to employment.

**Rural work** – enables marginalised rural young people to become active citizens in their own community and develops processes through which they can articulate their needs and influence policy and service provision.

**Area based youth work strategies** – develops, implements and supports strategies to work with young men.

# 70 YouthAction NORTHERN IRELAND YEARS

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