

PEACE BUILDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Peace Network in cooperation with the Reconstruction and Resettlement Council, Cyprus hosted a seminar and a workshop on 'Peace Building for Young People', on 6 and 7 November in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Designed to share some of the key learnings from youth focussed initiatives that have been funded through the European Union's PEACE Programme along with the experiences of youth practitioners in Cyprus the seminar attracted a number of influential attendees.

One of the core objectives of the event was to provide an opportunity for youth practitioners in Cyprus and Northern Ireland to exchange ideas and best practice on the training of youth workers and the evaluation of different youth programmes.

Opening the seminar Nicos Mesaritis, Chairman of the Council for Reconstruction and Resettlement, Cyprus, said:

"This event will allow the members of the Peace Network to collectively share their unique experiences of peace building with young people and in doing so enhance their own individual projects. By working with the young people of today to help them overcome any prejudices they may have we are positively influencing the leaders of tomorrow and contributing towards the creation of a more peaceful and stable society."

At the event Martin McMullan from YouthAction, based in Northern Ireland, outlined some of the techniques used to reach young people through the organisations EU funded 'Young Men and Violence' project, which helps address the negative attitudes of young men directly affected by the conflict from disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland.

Chrystalleni Socratous and Marko Gazivoda from the Cyprus Network for Youth Development discussed the impact that the 'Youth Activism Network' is having in building positive relationships amongst young people from different communities across the island.

Speaking at the seminar Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the Special EU Programmes Body said:

"The PEACE Programmes have had a lasting and meaningful impact on the delivery of innovative support initiatives aimed specifically at children and young people. The standard of projects which have received funding remains very high and over the years we have amassed a lot of experience in this area. This is an excellent forum through which we can share that knowledge and benefit from the first hand experiences of other countries within the Network."

Following the seminar a workshop was held where youth practitioners from Northern Ireland shared some of their practical experience in designing, facilitating and evaluating youth work programmes with other practitioners from across Cyprus.

The SEUPB acts as the secretariat for the Peace Network, which was set up to effectively communicate the experience of managing, implementing and evaluating EU PEACE funding in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.

Peace building for young people is just one of 13 different pre-determined themes that the Network is working through as it facilitates the learning, exchange and transfer of knowledge amongst its growing number of participants.

For more information about the Peace Network please visit www.seupb.eu

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